

PERSONAL RESOURCES AND JOB BURNOUT OF HIGH-LEVEL MANAGERS IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN POLAND

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Abstract

Background. The proper functioning of man in different areas of their life depends largely on their personal resources. This equipment becomes especially important in the case of high environmental requirements (e.g. in an organisation), which may lead to negative psychological phenomena such as job burnout.

Research aims. The aim of this paper is to analyse the impact of personal resources (the sense of life meaning and the optimism level of an employee) on the level of job burnout.

Methodology. The group of 119 Polish high-level managers in two large international production companies were included in the research. Three questionnaires: diagnosing the sense of meaning of life, optimism, and job burnout were used. The regression analysis has shown that both optimism of managers and the sense of meaning of life have a significant impact on the level of job burnout. However, this impact is differentiated.

Key findings. The research shows that optimism and sense of life presence protects against job burnout, but the search for meaning of life is positively related to burnout. In this context, employees and organisations should be advised to strengthen the optimism level and the presence of life meaning.

Keywords: managers, job burnout, personal resources, optimism, meaning of life.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In Poland high-level managers constitute a group which is subject to psychological examination to a small extent. It results from a difficult

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access to this group and its heavy workload, which often makes it impossible to save up sufficient time to participate in the study. This profession is associated with many stressful situations, requires the manager to have a number of personal competences, and a wide range of skills. It is also related to a very high legal and financial responsibility. A manager is then under the influence of numerous aggravating factors. Today's reality places many challenges before managers, which require the right skills to cope with. A manager must deal with developing and executing the strategy of the organisation, making decisions in unexpected situations, activities resulting from the need to adapt the managed entities to the market as a result of changes in the business environment, actions including strategic and operational projects. Therefore, special attention is paid to the role of "soft" competencies of a manager, which are understood as personal predispositions – psychological and interpersonal – social (Carvalho & Rabechini, 2015). It seems that the possession of these competencies is the most important integrating element of personality associated with the ability to manage effectively. This is due to the fact that the classical approach to the duties of a manager has today significantly expanded in the direction of the interpersonal, negotiation, informative, and social function. The manager's work is thus linked with continuous experience of difficulties, liability, life under time pressure, a continued volatility and heavy-duty emotional stress (Matin, Razavi & Emamgholizadeh, 2014). As a result, managers bear high costs of efficiency in work and they are the professional group that is particularly vulnerable to health risks. Of course, defining the extent of the health problems that are the result of their work is not an easy task. It is believed that job burnout is one of such effects and it also adversely affects physical health. Job burnout is not in itself a form of psychopathology, but it can lead to a series of mental and physical disorders, such as vegetative neurosis, anxiety disorders, or depression (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Working in tension and under time pressure, as managers do, causes the appearance of somatic complaints, e.g. acquired hypertension (Gibson, Fritz & Kacher, 2009). Research on managers show a strong link between the undertaken professional role and the so-called type A behaviour that is related, among other, to ischemic heart disease (Myrtek, 2001), but also just with job burnout (Hallberg, Johansson & Schaufeli, 2007). A chronic overload of one's body carries the risk of development of other somatic diseases, such

as stomach ulcers and the irritable bowel syndrome, but also exposed is the motor, endocrine, and immune system (O'Leary, 1990). As it is seen, managers bear high costs of efficiency at work. Therefore, it is good to look at those resources that can protect an employee against the onset of job burnout.

Job burnout

The appearance of the concept of burnout in psychological literature is attributed to the American psychiatrist Herbert Freudenberger (Freudenberger, 1975). He defined the burnout as to fail, wear out, or become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources. The knowledge of burnout initially came mainly from clinical case studies and observations, on the basis of which a common trait could be seen that occurs in burned-out workers. Twenty years ago, people saw this problem mainly in people-oriented professions and related to helping others. The 90's have brought an extension of the concept of burnout to other professions, through the social services sector, the military, priests, and managers (Leiter & Maslach, 1998). The issue of burnout emerged as a social problem being a result of difficult, stressful working conditions (Leiter & Maslach, 1998). Therefore Golembiewski draws attention to the role of management and organisation in the process of emergence and prevention of burnout (Golembiewski *et al.*, 1998). However, the sources of burnout are also sought in the characteristics of the subject. For example Hobfoll (1989) recognises the problem in the category of loss of resources of the subject without the possibility of replenishment. The causes of burnout are sought both in environmental factors, directly related to the work, and in subjective ones, related to the resources of an employee. It is this subjective approach based on the resources of the subject that is particularly interesting in the context of the study presented in this article.

Regardless of the causes of burnout, its symptoms are always very distinctive.

Emotional exhaustion – is considered the key symptom of the syndrome, which reveals the strongest and most consistent associations with stressors occurring at work, such as overwork, lack of social support, or problems with the performance of the role (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). That symptom is accompanied by numerous psychosomatic diseases.

Depersonalisation is another component of job burnout, which in the recent studies of Maslach and Leiter (1997) is called *cynicism* that is excessive distancing of oneself in interpersonal relations. Depersonalisation refers to negative, callous, or too inert reactions to other people who are usually recipients of the services of the person (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The discussed dimension is considered to be an unconscious form of self-defence (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001) by creating an emotional buffer (e.g. separation of feelings from the problems of others, the so-called objectification of people, a patient becomes for a doctor a case of a disease and not a man of flesh and blood).

A reduced sense of personal accomplishment is a response to the failure in coping with stress, which is associated with dissatisfaction with their own achievements and a sense of lack of competence. It is accompanied, among other, by unwillingness to work, the disappearance of commitment, tendency to evaluate themselves and their work in negative terms (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Recently an extensive research on the job burnout syndrome has been carried out. It seems that today more than ever the workplace is a fertile ground for job burnout and the sources of the problem lie in the general economic, technological, and management philosophy trends. Therefore, along with the economic changes, burnout has become a more common phenomenon, which affects a much wider group than just occupations based on helping others (Maslach, 2001). Because the phenomenon of burnout is a serious social issue today, one should look for such resources of an individual that may protect against its onset.

Psychological resources

The proper functioning of man in different areas of their life depends largely on their psychological equipment that is characteristics and skills which they can use. This equipment becomes especially important in the case of high environmental requirements, which may lead to the depletion of resources and the emergence of negative psychological phenomena such as stress, frustration, and job burnout (Hobfoll, 2002). It turns out, however, that we can identify in the equipment of man such resources that specifically protect us from the negative effects of the operation in demanding situations.

There is many theoretical perspectives regarding psychological resources. Among them are the theories assuming the existence of single key resources and theories leaning towards multi-dimensional treatment of resources. Among the indicated resources are the following: sense of control, sense of coherence, personality hardiness, goal-directed behaviour, or even perceived social support (a variable in some sense social, not purely psychological) (Hobfoll, 2002). Probably, one of the most common concept is the theory of psychological capital (Avey, Luthans & Jensen, 2009) which includes four elements. The authors of this construct “(...) simply use the term psychological capital (...) to represent individual motivational propensities that accrue through positive psychological constructs such as efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience” (Luthans, Avolio & Avey, 2007, p. 542).

Optimism. Today the most common psychological theory of optimism used in the research is the theory of dispositional optimism of Scheier and Carver (1993). Optimism is here understood as a personality trait that is relatively constant and independent of the situation. It involves a general expectation that life will bring us more good than bad things. According to the authors, optimism is linked to the main motive in human life which is to achieve a set objectives (Czerw, 2010; Scheier & Carver, 1993).

For a discussion within this article, it is very important that optimism is a psychological variable, which very frequently is of interest to researchers studying the psychological aspect of health and disease. Following the literature in this area, one can see that most studies in which optimism exists as an independent variable usually relates to people affected by chronic disease such as coronary heart disease) or sudden and very aggravating events such as a heart attack, cardiac surgery, etc. (Scheier & Caever, 1993; Czerw, 2010; Kepka *et al.*, 2013).

Although most research is performed in a very narrow context (individual measures of functioning of the body), however they always indicate that the optimists have better health, higher resistance of the body, or a better response to treatment than the pessimists. However, data exists that indicates a universal character of those relationships. In the analyses conducted by Gallagher, Lopez, and Pressman (Gallagher, Lopez & Pressman, 2013) the obtained results indicate that for most subjects and in most countries, a higher level of optimism is associated not only with a better subjective well-being, but also with objective health indicators. The authors of the analyses say that their study

provides compelling evidence that optimism is widespread and that the relationship between optimism and improvement of the mental and health functioning are not limited to industrialised countries, in which the studies are usually carried out. Of course in literature we may encounter reports from research on relationships between optimism and not only physical health, but also with psychological health indicators, among them the job burnout of employees. The pattern of dependence is similar to physical health. Research indicates that employees' optimism is a resource that can protect them against burnout (Hayes & Weathington, 2007).

The cited research as a tool to measure the level of optimism used the LOT-R questionnaire (Scheier, Carver & Bridges, 1994). It is a tool resulting directly from the theory of dispositional optimism treating this variable as one-dimensional. However, it is not the only way of treating this psychological variable. Considering the theory of dispositional optimism as a general starting point and supplementing it with the theory of attitudes a proposal emerged to treat optimism just as attitude. Such an approach has already been repeatedly verified in studies using the Optimistic Attitude Questionnaire (Czerw, 2010, 2015). This perspective assumes the multi-dimensionality of optimism, which allows a closer look at the functioning of people of varying intensity of the optimistic attitude. The extracted dimensions are *achievement orientation* motivational dimension. A high score on this scale means a tendency to achieve the objective despite the difficulties. The second dimension is the *incaution*. This is a behavioural dimension. Individuals who earn high scores are characterised by unsafe behaviours. *Positive thinking* is the next dimension. It is linked with the expectation of positive events regardless of their own actions. So it can be said that the result on this scale is the effect of generalised positive thinking about one's future. The fourth dimension is *openness*, which is understood in cognitive terms and concerns the attitude to new, unusual behaviour and experiences. Those who get high scores in this dimension of optimism are not afraid of the new and of taking up challenges.

However, it seems that meaning of life, which next to optimism is felt by managers, can make a huge difference in the appearance of burnout.

Meaning of life. The concept of the meaning of life has a long history starting from the conceptualisation of eudaimonism by Aristotle

(Linley & Joseph, 2004). We owe the emergence of the meaning of life as a clinical construct to the texts of a psychiatrist – Victor Frankl (Morgan & Farsides, 2009). He stated that people are very strongly motivated to seek a personal meaning of life. The idea is to understand the nature of life, have a sense that life is essential, important, valuable, or intentional. Since then many psychologists have begun to use this term. In modern psychology, the meaning of life has become a target for research on optimal and transcendent human experience, individuation, maturity, and potential of the individual (Morgan & Farsides, 2009). Some researchers define the meaning as the coherence of life (Antonovsky & Sagy, 1986), others associate it with a focus on personal goals and important values (Emmons, 2005; Ryff & Singer, 1998).

However, one of the most famous contemporary theories about the meaning of life draws attention to the need to distinguish the time perspectives in research on meaning of life (Steger *et al.*, 2008). According to this theory, the awareness of having a purpose in the present time and the need to strive for it and continued acquisition in the future are important. It seems especially substantial that the acquisition of the meaning of life (perspective of the future) means its active search. In addition, this activity is bound to a constant effort, marked by tenacity and intensity in establishing or expanding the awareness of the importance of one's own life (Steger *et al.*, 2008). Both the theoretical assumptions and studies show that these two time dimensions have therefore a slightly different meaning to human life, but are mutually complementary. Based on this duality of the meaning of life, Steger constructed an MLQ questionnaire (Steger *et al.*, 2006). The scale concerning the present measures understanding of the importance of the meaning of life and consciousness of the held satisfactory purpose in life. Whereas, the scale in view of the future measures the need to seek and a continuous giving of a meaning and purpose to your life.

Despite a number of conceptual differences, researchers agree on the existence of relationship between the meaning of life and eudaimonic well-being, which relates to strengthening the potential and resources of a subject in order to support personal development. This means that people who currently feel a sense of their lives are more optimistic, have higher levels of self-esteem and feel positive emotions (Garrosa-Hernández *et al.*, 2013). Also numerous studies of Steger and his colleagues show that the presence of the meaning

of life is positively associated with well-being, and negatively with anxiety or depression (Steger *et al.*, 2006; Steger & Samman, 2012). In contrast, the search for meaning is positively associated with rumination, negative emotions, and depression (Steger *et al.*, 2006).

Emmons (2005) distinguishes four additional areas in which the subject may have a sense of meaning: work (achievement), intimacy (relationships with others), spirituality (religion), and self-transcendence. As it can be seen, he refers the meaning of life also to the professional area of human functioning. It is also worth mentioning that the researchers of well-being at work often refer just to feeling the meaning. It is just that the sense relates to objectives and tasks performed within one's professional activity (Czerw, 2014; Wrześniewski, Dutton & Debebe, 2003). In this context, it is a rather surprising fact that so little research has been conducted that directly relate to the relationship of the meaning of life and job burnout. However, one can come across single examples of studies that touch on this problem. The results of these studies indicate a negative relationship between the perceived meaning of life and burnout (Garrosa-Hernández *et al.*, 2013; Mason, 2013). For this reason, the connection of the problem of feeling a meaning in life with a measure of the quality of functioning at work, which is burnout, seems to be an important area of research.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the present study was to examine whether there is a link between the personal resources of a subject (optimism and meaning of life) and the level of job burnout in managers in a large international organisation. In addition, it seemed important to check whether the demographic variables have any relation to the burnout of managers. Therefore, based on the results of research on job burnout, optimism and meaning of life described in this article, the following hypotheses were made:

H1 – there is a negative relationship between the burnout of managers and their optimism;

H2 – there is a negative relationship between the burnout of managers and their presence of meaning of life;

H3 – there is a positive relationship between the burnout of managers and their search for the meaning of life;

H4 – there is a positive relationship between the burnout of managers and their seniority.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Participants

The study involved 119 high-level managers (representing 100% of top management in the organisations under research) employed by two Japanese corporations functioning in Poland, in the province of Lower Silesia. The respondents came from a manufacturing company, all of them had college degrees and were Poles. Among the respondents there were 112 men and only 7 women. The age of the respondents ranged from 29 to 51 years ($M = 41.29$, $SD = 4.23$). Whereas, the seniority ranged from 7 to 30 years ($M = 15.40$, $SD = 4.86$).

Measures

In the study three psychological questionnaires were used.

For the measurement of job burnout the latest version of the tool of Maslach – Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) was used. The questionnaire consists of three dimensions: *exhaustion* (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0,94$), *cynicism (depersonalization)* (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0,98$) and *inefficacy (reduced personal accomplishment)* (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0,72$). The subject determines the frequency of occurrence of their feelings, described in the form of affirmative sentences in a seven-point Likert scale. Individual points are described on a scale from "0 – never" to "6 – every day". The high level of burnout is evidenced by high scores on each scale and the global index, which is formed by summing the results on the scales.

The OAQ questionnaire (Optimistic Attitude Questionnaire) by Czerw (2010, 2015) was used for measuring the level of optimism. The questionnaire consists of four dimensions: *achievement orientation* (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$), *incaution* (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$), *positive thinking* (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.80$), and *openness* (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.79$). Here, too,

one can calculate the total score, which concerns the general level of optimism.

The Polish adaptation of Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) by Steger and colleagues carried out by Kossakowska, Kwiatek and Stefaniak (2013) was used to measure the meaning of life. It is a tool consisting of 10 statements. The statements are evaluated on the seven-point Likert scale (from “absolutely untrue” to “absolutely true”). The questionnaire consists of two scales *the MLQ-P scale* – The Presence of Meaning (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.86$), which measures the declared, already possessed meaning in life; *The MLQ-S Scale* – The Search for Meaning (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.87$), which measures the need to seek and continuous giving of a meaning and purpose in life.

The study was conducted in the direct form – questionnaires were distributed to managers and collected from them after a few days. All participants were informed about their voluntary participation in the study and the anonymity of the collected data. The anonymity procedure was preserved by collecting questionnaires in sealed envelopes.

RESULTS

When preparing to carry out appropriate analyses, a preliminary description of the results was made. The descriptive statistics and the distribution of variables in comparison to normal distribution were verified. It turned out that all the measured psychological variables in their distribution do not differ from a normal distribution – the statistic values for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test gained the significance level of $p > 0.05$. Since the study was conducted in two organisations (N = 50 in organisation A, N = 69 in organisation B), it had to be verified whether their employees do not differ in terms of all psychological variables. It turned out that between the two groups there are no significant differences.

The question on the level of job burnout in the studied group also seemed interesting. As in the materials provided by the questionnaire’s author a categorisation of results to high, average, and low was also proposed, it became possible to assign the results to those indications. The result of this analysis turned out to be rather dramatic. As it can be seen (Table 1) almost all managers obtained the results categorised as high.

Table 1. Job burnout level among the studied group of managers (N = 119) – the number of people in each category was given

Score level	Exhaustion	Cynicism (depersonalization)	Inefficacy (reduced personal accomplishment)	Job burnout
Low	0	0	82	0
Moderate	0	0	16	6
High	119	119	21	113

Source: own study.

This applies particularly to the dimensions of exhaustion and cynicism, where literally everyone obtained high scores. Whereas, the third dimension – inefficacy has a totally different pattern of results. In this case most people obtained low results.

Correlation of job burnout with optimism and meaning of life

The next step in the analysis was to check what is the relationship between burnout and psychological variables treated here as the managers' personal resource.

The analysis of correlation of burnout with the level of optimism demonstrated in the case of all dimensions and summary results that the two variables are negatively related (Table 2). This means that hypothesis 1 was confirmed – the higher the level of optimism in managers, the lower the burnout.

Table 2. Correlations (r Pearson's) of personal resources and job burnout (N = 119)

	Achievement orientation	Incaution	Positive thinking	Openness	Optimism – general level	The Presence of Meaning	The Search for Meaning
Exhaustion	-0.391**	-0.391**	-0.337**	-0.259**	-0.455**	-0.183*	0.585**
Cynicism (depersonalization)	-0.473**	-0.273**	-0.482**	-0.219*	-0.493**	-0.502**	0.558**
Inefficacy (reduced personal accomplishment)	-0.614**	-0.241**	-0.726**	-0.418**	-0.680**	-0.599**	0.766**
Job burnout	-0.610**	-0.339**	-0.658**	-0.378**	-0.671**	-0.551**	0.778**

** p < 0.01 (two-tail).

* p < 0.05 (two-tail).

Source: own study.

Whereas, the analysis of the correlation of job burnout and the meaning of life showed a different pattern of relationships (Table 2). In this case burnout is positively related to searching for the meaning of life. This means that the higher the level of searching for meaning in life, the higher the level of burnout. However, the matter looks different in case of possession of the meaning of life. A negative relationship was exposed here. It can be said that with increasing sense of the presence of a meaning of life, the burnout decreases in managers who took part in the test. So a conclusion can be derived that hypothesis 2 and 3 have been positively verified.

Analysis of personal resources on the job burnout influence

The next step was to check how the personal resources of managers: optimism and meaning of life (felt and searched for) affect the level of their burnout. For this purpose an analysis of regression with the introduction method was performed. Two models were checked. The first took into account only the psychological variables (personal resources) as independent variables, while in the second one the analysis also included demographic variables (organisation and seniority in the organisation). Each time the dependent variable was the summary indicator of job burnout.

The analysis shows that demographic variables are in this case of no significance (organisation: $\beta = 0.001$, $t = 0.016$, $p = 0.998$ and seniority in the organisation: $\beta = 0.052$, $t = 1.067$, $p = 0.288$). This means that hypothesis number 4 has not been confirmed. The predictors of job burnout are therefore personal resources. The model with personal resources only is well adjusted ($F(3,115) = 108.264$, $p = 0.001$) and explains as much as 74% of the variance.

Taking into account the contribution of each of the personal resources, one can notice a very interesting pattern of dependence (Figure 1). The presence of meaning of life and optimism of managers have a significant positive meaning. However, the search for meaning of life has an opposite signification. Therefore, we have two different patterns of personal resources influencing job burnout. First, the higher the level of optimism and the level of the presence of life meaning, the lower the level of job burnout. Second, the higher the level of the search for meaning of life, the higher the level of job burnout. Thus, it can be said

that optimism and the presence of life meaning may protect against job burnout, while searching for the meaning of life rather promotes job burnout in the examined managers.

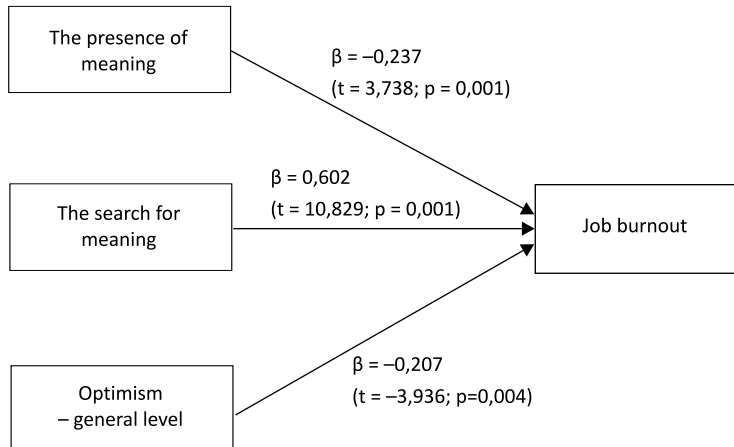


Figure 1. The influence of a manager’s personal resources (optimism and meaning of life) on the job burnout level

Source: own research.

The result concerning the relationship between MLQ measure and burnout is logically consistent with previous reports of studies described in the introduction.

DISCUSSION

The research presented in this article shows the existence of some subjective resources that can protect employees against job burnout. This role may be certainly assigned to optimism, which confirms the relationships obtained in other research studies. For example, studies described by Riolli and Savicki (2003) conducted on employees of an information service showed that in a situation of high stress in the workplace the high level of optimism reduces the emotional exhaustion and cynicism, but does not reduce personal accomplishment. In contrast, when the stress is not recognized as high, optimism does not play this role. This means that the level of perceived stress at work acts as a moderator and the employee’s level of optimism is particularly important precisely

in high stress situations. Unfortunately, the research discussed in this article did not take into account the control of stress levels perceived by the respondents. Therefore, it cannot be determined whether in this case optimism plays as well its buffer role particularly in the case of high levels of stress. A similar role is played by the presence of life meaning. High levels of this variable are related to low levels of burnout. This result is in line with some data on the impact of the meaning of life on burnout, occupational stress, and other negative phenomena at work (Garrosa-Hernández *et al.*, 2013; Mason, 2013).

The study discussed in this article also indicates that the search for meaning in life can be regarded as an important factor in increasing the level of burnout. Given that the meaning of life can be seen as particularly important for a subject type of resource, one can try to explain on the basis of the theory of conservation of resources (Hobfoll, 2002) the different role of having and searching for the meaning. The theory assumes that people aspire to obtain, maintain, and protect resources and in a situation where resources are threatened or already lost this stress occurs. This puts the acquisition and maintenance of resources as the main motive for a lot of human behaviours. Protecting and maintaining resources requires a lot of attention and energy. In this way the loss of resources may be the key to the experience of stress (Hobfoll, 2002). In the case of the research discussed in the article, the search for the meaning of life can probably be seen as the process of obtaining vital resources. This process is very costly for a subject and leads to stress. While stress, as it is known, increases the probability of occurrence of job burnout.

Since the studied group of managers functions in organisations of Japanese roots, it is worth considering how much the values of a culture foreign to the Poles can affect the level of burnout of the employees and the possession and search for meaning in life. As shown by the studies conducted in an inter-cultural paradigm, the differences can be really important. It turns out that in the comparative tests between the Americans and the Japanese distinct relationship between the presence of meaning and search for meaning of life were obtained (Steger *et al.*, 2008). In the American group a higher level of ownership of meaning was reported, while the Japanese group achieved a higher level of search for the meaning. In addition, in the United States the search for the meaning of life was negatively associated with having a meaning of life and measures of well-being,

which is consistent with the previously discussed studies. Whereas in Japan a harmonious, positive relationship between these variables was achieved. Thus, it seems that the search for the meaning of life can be heavily influenced by culture. Results obtained in this research indicate a pattern of dependence similar to the American one, not the Japanese one. The obtained results indicate a weak negative correlation ($r = -0.29, p \leq 0.001$) between the search for meaning and the presence of life meaning. As in the American samples, it may mean that it is more the Poles who create the culture of this organisation compared to their Japanese superiors (only individuals residing on the spot, in the organisation).

It is also confirmed by the statement of one of the managers in an interview. Asked whether he sees the impact of Japanese values on the work system in his organisation, he said:

Indeed, at the level of the management, we can see a discrepancy between the expectations of our superiors from Japan and the values guiding the majority of factory workers. The Japanese expect a huge reliability and loyalty to the company and its products. Meanwhile, workers are rather aloof in relation to their company. (...) It seems to me that we are, however, a rather Polish than Japanese organisation. (...) Reconciling these two worlds requires a lot of energy and for me personally, it is very exhausting. I used to work in a completely Polish company and I had the feeling of greater comfort.

As can be seen, the problem of cultural differences escalates the stress among managers who are, in some way, between two cultures. In such difficult social conditions, personal resources of managers probably play a particularly significant role. This thesis should be verified in further studies. Certainly it would be interesting to compare the results of the carried out research also in a culturally homogeneous organization.

What is very worrying in general is the high level of job burnout (exhaustion, cynicism) among the examined managers. The only dimension of burnout in which mostly low results were obtained is the reduced personal accomplishment. Perhaps in the process of development of the syndrome of job burnout it is the dimension which occurs as the latest. Of course it is only a hypothesis which would require research conducted with repeated measurements in the same group of people.

Undoubtedly, the strength of the research described in this article is the examined group. It is indeed not too large, but it constitutes a full representation of high-level management of both organisations. This type of group is not often subject to psychological examination. Reaching them required a lot of effort and personal involvement of the researcher. Another advantage of this study is a combination of two psychological variables (optimism and meaning of life) with a different nature, but which together create significant protection against burnout. Each of these variables has already been tested in other studies in association with burnout, but it was not done in one common plan of study. This undoubtedly represents some innovation.

It seems that a conclusion concerning the common impact of optimism and the presence of life meaning is particularly important. When both variables are at a high level, then the probability of burnout is low, if both decrease then the level of burnout rises.

A weakness of the study is the fact that it was carried out almost exclusively on a male group of managers. Therefore, the conclusions can only be drawn in relation to men. It is not known whether in the case of women in leading positions the results would repeat in the same pattern. It is therefore necessary to repeat such research on a respectively large group of women.

The presented study contributes to expanding the knowledge in the job area and the role of personal resources in the prevention of negative phenomena at work. Optimism and a meaning of life have become independent variables in this study. It was verified how the level of these resources influences burnout. It was found that both resources play a slightly different role. Optimism and sense of life presence protect against job burnout, but the search for meaning of life is positively related to burnout. In this context, employees and organisations should be advised to strengthen the optimism level and the presence of life meaning. Perhaps increasing the perception of the meaning of work would be the key to increasing presence of life meaning in general. However, this idea requires further research on the relationship between the perception of the meaning of life and the meaning of work.

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ZASOBY WŁASNE I WYPALENIE ZAWODOWE MENEDŻERÓW WYŻSZEGO SZCZEBLA W ORGANIZACJACH MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH W POLSCE

Abstrakt

Tło badań. Prawidłowe funkcjonowanie człowieka w różnych dziedzinach jego życia w dużej mierze jest uzależnione od jego własnych zasobów. To wyposażenie staje się szczególnie ważne w przypadku wysokich wymagań środowiska (np. w organizacji), co może prowadzić do negatywnych zjawisk psychologicznych, takich jak wypalenie zawodowe.

Cel badań. Celem tej pracy jest przeanalizowanie wpływu własnych zasobów (poczucie sensu życia i poziom optymizmu pracownika) na poziom wypalenia zawodowego.

Metodologia. W badaniu uwzględniono grupę 119 polskich menedżerów wyższego szczebla w dwóch międzynarodowych firmach produkcyjnych. Wykorzystano trzy kwestionariusze: diagnozowanie poczucia sensu życia, optymizmu i wypalenia zawodowego. Analiza regresji wykazała, iż zarówno optymizm, jak i poczucie sensu życia menedżerów mają znaczący wpływ na poziom wypalenia zawodowego. Jednakże wpływ ten jest zróżnicowany.

Kluczowe wnioski. Badanie pokazuje, iż optymizm i obecność sensu życia chronią przed wypaleniem zawodowym, ale poszukiwanie sensu życia ma pozytywny związek z wypaleniem. W tym kontekście należy poradzić pracownikom i organizacjom, aby wzmacniali poziom optymizmu i obecności sensu życia.

Słowa kluczowe: menedżerowie, wypalenie zawodowe, zasoby osobiste, optymizm, sens życia.