Abstract

This study examined the phenomenon of burnout among managers in informal education systems as compared to managers in formal education systems. The main research questions dealt with possible differences between the two groups of managers in various measures of burnout, work engagement, professional identity and social support, as well as identifying the unique factors contributing to burnout among managers in informal education. Burnout is defined as a loss of energy, a separation from the self, lack of motivation and low commitment to the organization (Freudenberg, 1974). Many organizations deal with the issue of employee commitment to the organization. Commitment to a role is one of the most significant factors for professional performance, or alternatively a tendency to leave jobs, which creates employee turnover in the organization (Becker & Billing, 1993; Morrow, 1983), which constitutes a measure of employees' professional commitment (Cohen, 1999). Much research literature deals with burnout, its causes and characteristics in various frameworks (Fisherman, 2016). It can be said that today the issue of burnout, professional identity and work engagement is of great concern to researchers in identifying the causes and factors for employees leaving their workplace.

Research Objective

The purpose of the current study is to examine issues of support, work engagement, professional identity, and burnout in relation to the population of managers in the informal education system. This research will enable leaders of informal educational organizations to become familiar with the daily situation of managers in these frameworks, to examine the difficulties, challenges and issues that accompany them while filling their position.

Research Population

In the quantitative section, 111 managers from the formal and informal education systems participated, filling out questionnaires on: occupational burnout, work engagement, professional identity, and social support. In the qualitative section, in-depth interviews were conducted with five managers from the informal education system. Data analysis included statistical analysis of the quantitative data and content analysis of the interviews.

Research Tools

The tools used in this study included:

1. Quantitative section:

- Demographic questionnaire - personal background.
- Social support questionnaire - examines support from family, friends, and co-workers.
- Professional identity questionnaire - examines aspects of professional identity such as job satisfaction.
- Involvement questionnaire - examines levels of energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to work.
- Burnout questionnaire - examines the degree of occupational burnout.

2. Qualitative section :

- In-depth semi-structured interviews with managers - included open questions about work experiences, difficulties, challenges and more.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods provided a broad and in-depth perspective of the research topic.

Research Findings

The current study findings revealed several significant differences between managers in the informal education system and their counterparts in the formal education system:

Firstly, it was found that managers in informal education report higher levels of social support from family and friends, as compared to managers in formal education. This suggests that for these managers, personal support is a critical resource in dealing with the challenges of the role.

Secondly, managers in informal education were found to have a stronger sense of professional identity, manifesting itself in greater job satisfaction and a more significant perception of work as a mission and a goal. This may be related to the more flexible and diverse nature of the role in informal education.

Additionally, managers in informal education were found to demonstrate higher levels of involvement and vigor in their work. It can be assumed that this finding is associated with the characteristics of flexibility and dynamism of the role in this framework.

On the other hand, no significant difference was found in overall burnout levels between the two groups. However, the study indicates several unique burnout factors among

managers in informal education, including social support, increased involvement, and an overly positive attitude towards the staff.

Research Significance

The literature review indicates a lack of up-to-date research on managers in informal education. Much of the research reviewed in the educational field worldwide deals with burnout of teachers and managers in formal education. Therefore, examining the issue of burnout among managers in informal organizations can contribute to the field, to the development of practical leadership practices for educational leaders through in-depth analysis and examination of aspects dealing with burnout of these managers. This research will enable leaders of informal educational organizations to become familiar with the daily reality of managers in these frameworks, to examine the difficulties, challenges and issues that accompany them while filling their role.

Research Contribution

This research provides vital information as to the unique characteristics of burnout among managers in informal education, unlike managers in formal education. It contributes a deeper understanding of risk and protective factors for burnout among these managers. The study enables the development of interventions tailored to prevent burnout and improve the mental well-being of managers in informal education. The research can significantly promote manager well-being and may contribute to the quality of education and well-being of students/ trainees/employees they manage. The research can advance understanding of the unique challenges these managers face and can help develop appropriate organizational policies and support. Further research on the subject is essential in advancing knowledge and its practical implementation in the field of informal education.

The main contribution of this study is in expanding research knowledge about burnout among this unique population of managers in the informal education system. The study provides important insights into the characteristics and causes of burnout among this population and can serve as a basis for developing tailored interventions to prevent burnout and improve the employment status of these managers. Further research on this topic may contribute to understanding burnout processes and promoting the mental well-being of managers in the education system.

In summary, the study significantly expands our understanding of the characteristics of burnout among managers in informal education, while indicating specific factors that

influence the phenomenon in this unique population. These findings will enable the development of tailored interventions in order to reduce burnout and promote the well-being of these managers.