

An Exploratory Study of Factors that Relate to Burnout in Hobby-Jobs

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Using the Job Demands-Resources model as a theoretical foundation, we explored the relationships among job demands, internal resources, and burnout in a unique population of workers—individuals with hobby-jobs (i.e. jobs created from a hobby). We examined four job demands (i.e. variety, constraints, time spent on hobby, hobby/job similarity) as antecedents of the three dimensions of burnout (i.e. emotional exhaustion, cynicism, professional efficacy) and moderating effects of internal resources (i.e. conscientiousness, emotional stability) on these relationships. We found that all four demands predicted emotional exhaustion. Further, variety and constraints related to cynicism and variety was associated with diminished professional efficacy. Conscientiousness and emotional stability moderated some of these relationships, indicating that these traits may indeed act as internal resources. Our findings suggest that individuals in hobby-jobs are affected by job demands as in other jobs, but may also face unique demands. Personality traits and behaviors consistent with those traits may help individuals pursuing hobby-jobs by protecting them from burnout.

INTRODUCTION

Caltech astronomy professor Mike Brown recently described his love for space, which was a childhood passion that continued into adulthood. His words likely resonate with many seeking to do what they love for a living: “Like many kids in the 1970s, I was space crazy . . . thirty-five years later and my hobby has become a full-time job” (Brown, 2011, p. 9). Not all

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