

Original Article (Quantified)

# Investigating the effect of customer's offensive behavior and work stress on job satisfaction with the mediating role of job burnout

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**Abstract**

The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the effect of customer insulting behavior and work stress on job satisfaction with the mediating role of job burnout. The statistical population in this study is the employees of Sepah Bank branches in Mashhad with a number of 630 people, and the minimum sample size was determined as 240 people by the Cochran formula. The sampling method was available non-probable. In this study, the data collection tool was a standard questionnaire, which was translated and localized, and its validity and reliability were examined. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficient were used for reliability, the content validity was confirmed by professors, and the construct validity was confirmed by confirmatory factor loadings analysis. In order to examine the hypotheses, structural equation modeling was facilitated using SmartPLS software. Based on the results obtained, the direct effect of customer insulting behavior and work stress on job burnout was confirmed. The effect of job burnout on employee job satisfaction was also confirmed. In this study, the direct effect of customer insult behavior and work stress on job satisfaction was not confirmed, but they affect job satisfaction through job burnout.

**Keywords:**

Customer abusive behavior,  
Work stress,  
Job satisfaction,  
Burnout.

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## Introduction

Job satisfaction is one of the key concepts in human resource management that has a significant impact on the individual and organizational performance of employees. Job satisfaction is defined as a positive and enjoyable feeling towards a job that can lead to improved productivity, increased employee retention in the organization, and improved organizational performance. However, job satisfaction is affected by several factors, including customer insult behavior and work stress. In service organizations, employees constantly interact with customers, and these interactions can lead to inappropriate behaviors from customers. Customer insult behavior, as one of the stressors in the workplace, can have a negative impact on employee well-being and job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2020).

On the other hand, work stress is also known as one of the factors affecting job satisfaction. Work stress can be caused by high workload, time pressure, role conflict, and other factors related to the workplace (Yang, 2019). Chronic work stress can lead to emotional exhaustion, reduced energy, and ultimately burnout. Burnout, as a syndrome caused by chronic stress, is accompanied by symptoms such as reduced energy, pessimism about the job, and reduced professional efficiency. This phenomenon can have a negative impact on job satisfaction and employee performance. Based on what has been explained, this study seeks to find an answer to the following question: What is the effect of abusive customer behavior and work stress on job satisfaction with the role of a mediator of burnout? Accordingly, the results of this study can be applicable to managers of service-oriented organizations and companies in addition to bank managers.

## Literature and Research Background

### Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction, as one of the most important concepts in human resource management, has a significant impact on individual and organizational performance. Job satisfaction is defined as a positive and enjoyable feeling towards one's job that can lead to improved productivity and increased employee retention in the organization. Job satisfaction is influenced by several factors, including working conditions, relationships with colleagues, payments and benefits, and work-life balance. Researches have shown that job satisfaction is positively associated with productivity, organizational commitment, and reduced turnover rates (Prasetyo et al., 2021).

### Customer Offensive Behavior

Customer offensive behavior refers to physical or verbal behaviors by customers that are contrary to social norms and organizational expectations. These behaviors can include disrespect, insults, aggression, and other inappropriate behaviors. Customer offensive behavior can have a negative impact on employees' well-being and job satisfaction, leading to increased levels of stress and emotional exhaustion. Research has shown that customer offensive behavior is positively associated with increased levels of work stress and burnout (Bi et al., 2021).

### Work stress

Work stress, as one of the factors affecting job satisfaction, can be caused by high workload, time pressure, role conflict and other factors related to the work environment. Chronic work stress can lead to emotional exhaustion, reduced energy and ultimately burnout. Researches have shown that work stress is positively associated with reduced job satisfaction and increased turnover rates (Prasetyo et al., 2021).

### **Job burnout**

As a syndrome caused by chronic stress, burnout is associated with symptoms such as reduced energy, pessimism towards the job, and reduced professional efficiency. This phenomenon can have a negative impact on job satisfaction and employee performance. Job burnout is often caused by continuous stressful interactions with customers, high workload and lack of organizational support. Researches have shown that burnout is positively associated with reduced job satisfaction and increased turnover rates (Soelton et al., 2020).

### **Research Background**

The the research results of Mehrara & Bahramzadeh (2023) entitled The Effect of Electronic Service Quality on Customer Behavior with the Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction (Case Study of Digikala Online Store Customers in Sari City), showed that customer satisfaction has a significant effect on customer behavior in online shopping, purchase motivation, and purchase behavior from the Digikala online store.

Gustiawan et al., (2023) conducted a study entitled Customer Rudeness, Employee Burnout, and Job Satisfaction in the Indonesian Hospitality Sector: A Socio-Economic Situation Perspective. The results of the study of 192 statistical samples collected show that customer insulting behavior has a positive and significant effect on employee burnout and emotional exhaustion. Also, rude behavior reduces employee job satisfaction.

Pu et al., (2022) conducted a study entitled The Effects of Customer Rudeness on Turnover Intention in Chinese Hotel Employees: A Chain Mediation Model. The results show that customer rudeness affects employees' turnover intention by affecting job burnout, job satisfaction, and professional identity.

### **Research Methodology**

This research is applicable in terms of purpose, and descriptive-survey in terms of method. The statistical population of this research included all employees of Sepah Bank branches in Mashhad with a number of 630 people, and using the Cochran formula, the minimum sample size was determined as 240 people. The sampling method in this research was non-probable and available. The data required for this research were collected through documentary methods and internet search as well as field methods. The data collection tool was a standard questionnaire, examined for validity and reliability after translation and localization. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficient were used to examine reliability, and its content validity was confirmed by professors, and construct validity was confirmed by confirmatory factor loadings analysis.

### **Research findings**

The results of this study were presented in the form of 2 main hypotheses and 5 sub-hypotheses and were tested: Insulting customer behavior has an effect on job satisfaction of employees of Sepah Bank in Mashhad with the mediating role of job burnout. The results show that the path coefficient is -0.103, the significance level is 0.011, and the t-statistic is 2.547, which confirms the first main hypothesis. The VAF index was also 0.83, which indicates the full role of job burnout as a mediating variable. In the second main hypothesis, work stress has an effect on job satisfaction with the mediating role of job burnout. The results of this hypothesis were also confirmed with a path coefficient of -0.338, a significance level of 0.000, and a t-statistic of 9.266. In examining the sub-hypotheses, customer insulting behavior did not have a significant direct effect on job satisfaction (path coefficient: 0.007, significance level: 0.925, and t-statistic equal to 0.094), but it had a significant effect on

burnout (path coefficient: 0.186, significance level: 0.003, and t-statistic equal to 2.960). On the other hand, work stress did not have a significant direct effect on job satisfaction (path coefficient: 0.044, significance level: 0.679, and t-statistic equal to 0.415), but it had a significant effect on burnout (path coefficient, 0.610, significance level 0.000, and t-statistic equal to 10.248). Finally, burnout had a significant and negative effect on job satisfaction (path coefficient -0.55, significance level 0.000, and t-statistic is 10.706).

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The results of this study show that customer insulting behavior and work stress do not directly affect job satisfaction, but they do affect job satisfaction through job burnout. These findings highlight the importance of managing job burnout in service organizations such as banks. Organizational managers should prevent job burnout by creating a positive work environment, reducing work stress, and providing necessary support for employees. Also, training employees in dealing with customer insulting behavior and using new technologies to reduce direct interactions with customers can help reduce work stress and improve job satisfaction. Based on the results obtained, the following suggestions are made:

- Increasing informal interactions: Holding recreational and sports camps and competitions between branches can help improve employee interactions and reduce burnout.
- Matching workload to employee capabilities: Managers should match employee workload and responsibilities to their capabilities to prevent stress and burnout.
- Conflict management: Managers' support for employees when organizational problems arise and managing conflicts can help reduce burnout.
- Using new technologies: Using offline services and service kiosks can prevent abusive customer behavior.
- Employee training: Training employees in dealing with angry and dissatisfied customers can help reduce work stress and improve job satisfaction.