

# Organizational Climate and Burnout: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach

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Eunju Lee, PhD

Rose Greene, MA

Nina Esaki, PhD

Jeehoon Kim, MSW



# Research Questions

- How does organizational climate influence worker burnout?
- How does worker's sense of control on the job or supervisory relationship affect worker burnout?
- Does worker's sense of control on the job or supervisory relationship mediate relations between organizational climate and burnout?



# Prior Research

- Organizational theorists and researchers emphasize the importance of work environments that cultivate an empowered work force and promote effective interaction with clients (Corsun & Enz, 1999; Howard, Peterson & Speer, 2000)
- Work stress is related more to organizational aspects of the work environment rather than to personal attributes (Dollard et al., 2000)
- Burnout is a serious concern in social services considering its relation to job satisfaction, effectiveness of service delivery, and turnover rates (Arches, 1991)



# Rationale for Study

- Despite the potential workplace benefits of empowerment, only a few studies have focused on empowerment within human service organizations (Foster-Fishman & Keys, 1997; Gutierrez, DeLois, & GlenMaye, 1995; Peterson & Speer, 2000)
- None among paraprofessionals in these settings (Wallach & Mueller, 2006)
- Empowerment is a relatively new variable waiting to be tested in the battle against burnout (Lee & Koh, 2001)
- An important task is for researchers to find the variables that might protect against burnout (Hochwalder, 2007)



# Data Collection

- Part of the on-going evaluation of a child abuse prevention program
- 3 randomized study sites in 2002, 7 sites in 2005, and 10 sites in 2006 across New York State
- Site visits
- Return by mail
- Incentives
- Confidentiality
- Response rate: above 90%
- Final sample size: 179



# Measures

- Socio-demographic characteristics
- Standardized instruments on:
  - Supervisory relationship
  - Perceived sense of control on the job
  - Organizational climate: organizational efficiency and work pressure
  - Worker burnout: feeling emotional exhaustion



# Supervisory Relationship

- Supervisory support questionnaire (Shulman, 1982)
- Two questions measured:
  - General satisfaction with supervision (1 to 4)
  - How supervisor was helpful to them (0 to 2)
- In general, home visitors were satisfied with their supervisor (Cronbach's  $\alpha=.843$ )



# Sense of Control on the Job

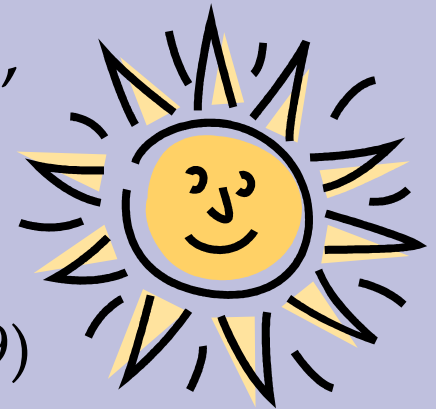
- Pearlin & Schooler's mastery scale modified with "on the job" (Guterman & Jayarante, 1994)
  - Ex. I have little control over the things that happen to me on my job
  - 7 items, ranging 1 to 4
- Higher score indicates home visitor's stronger sense of control on the job (Cronbach's  $\alpha=.771$ )





# Organizational Climate

- Work Environment Scale (Moos, 1974, 2004)
- Consisted of 9 independent sub-scales, each consisting of 9 items
- Two sub-scales used:
  - Task and planning efficiency (range 0 to 9)
    - Example: People pay a lot of attention to getting work done
  - Work pressure (range 0 to 9)
    - Example: There is consistent pressure to keep working



# Maslach Burnout Inventory

- Maslach & Jackson (1981)
- Emotional Exhaustion
  - Describe feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work
  - 9 items: range of 0 to 6
- Higher score indicates feeling more emotional exhaustion (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .903$ )



# Sample Characteristics

- Sample Size (N=179):
  - Round 1 (n=49) Round 2 (n=62) and Round 3 (n=68)
- Average age of home visitors: 38 years
- About half of home visitors finished at least two years of college
- Race:
  - Hispanic (n=55, 32%)
  - Black (n=42, 24%)
  - Non-Hispanic White (n=77, 44%)



# Analytic Strategy

- Examine an additive model and a path model
- Multiple Regression Analysis
  - Four steps: 1) socio-demographic covariates only; 2) satisfaction with supervisor; 3) sense of control on the job; and 4) task and planning efficiency & work pressure added
- Path analysis using structural equation modeling
  - Hypothesized model: worker's sense of control on the job or supervisory relationship mediates relations between organizational climate and worker burnout



# Results from the Additive Model

## *Relationship with Supervisor*

- Among covariates, age is the only significant predictor for worker burnout in the first step model
- Satisfaction with supervisor negatively affects worker burnout ( $\beta = -.221$ , Sig. = .004)

(Changes in  $R^2 = .046$ , Sig. F Changes = .004)



# Results from the Additive Model

## *Worker's sense of control on the job*

- Worker's sense of control on the job had substantially negative impacts on worker burnout ( $\beta = -.404$ , Sig. = .000)
- Covariates and satisfaction with supervisor did not significantly influence on worker burnout at all when worker's sense of control on the job was added

(3<sup>rd</sup> step model:  $R^2 = .234$ , Sig. = .000; Changes in  $R^2 = .137$ , Sig. F Changes = .000)



# Results from the Additive Model

## *Organizational Climate variables*

- Organizational climate measured by work pressure and task and planning efficiency were found as the strongest predictors for worker burnout ( $\beta=.451$ , Sig.=.000 &  $\beta= -.233$ , Sig.=.001)
- Worker's sense of control on the job had negative impacts on worker burnout while satisfaction with supervisor was still not significant

(Final model:  $R^2=.387$ , Sig.=.000; Changes in  $R^2 =.153$ , Sig. F Changes =.000)



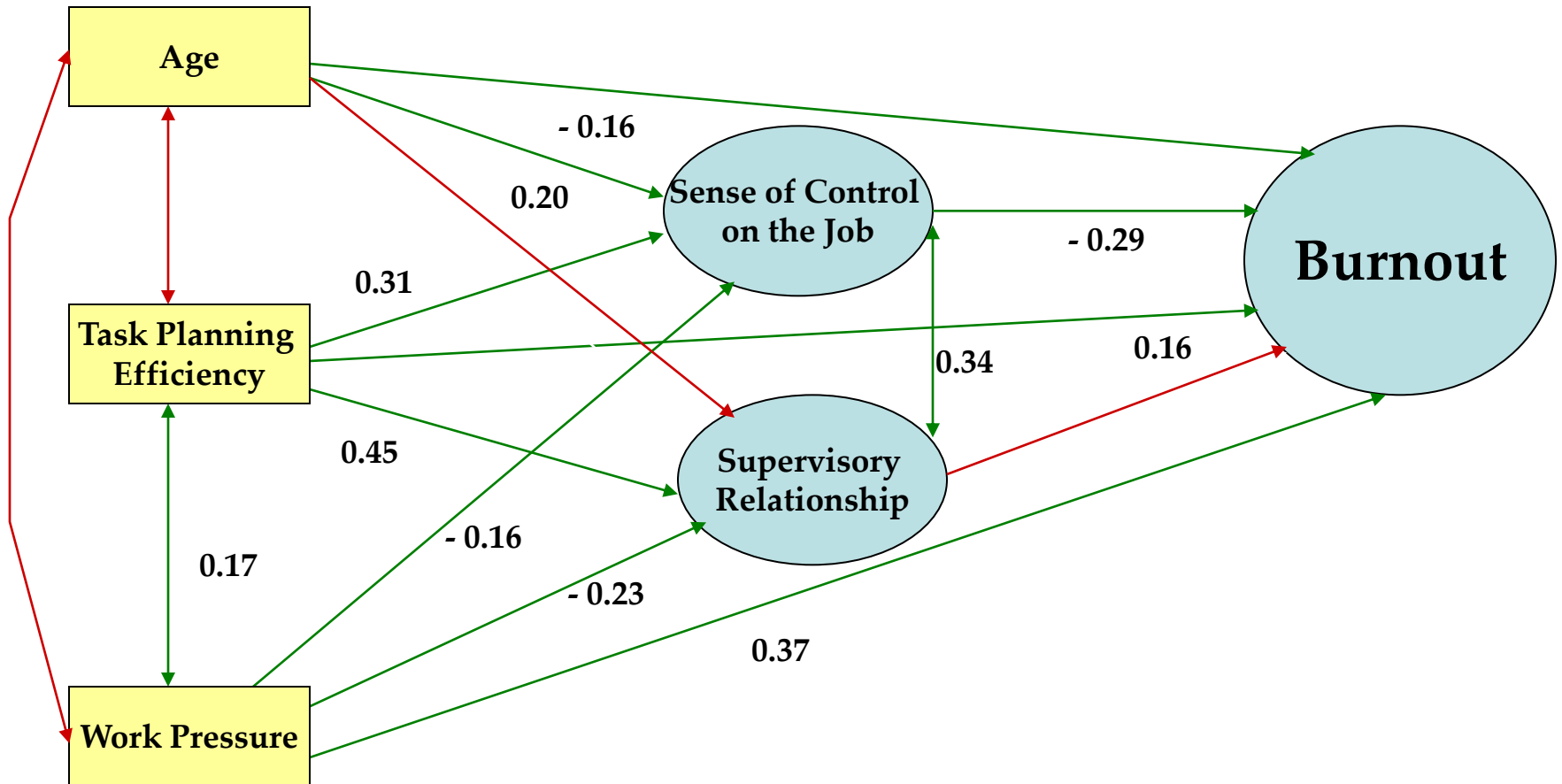
# Results from SEM

- Overall Measurement Model indicates acceptable fit to the data:
  - Minimum Fit Function  $\chi^2(177)=303.032$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .0593; 90% confidence interval for RMSEA (0.0465; 0.0715); and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.966
- Exogenous variables: age and task planning and efficiency & work pressure
- Endogenous variables:
  - Outcome variable: worker burnout
  - Mediating endogenous latent variables: worker's sense of control on the job and supervisory relationship





# SEM Results: Standardized Parameter Estimates



# Results from SEM

- Among mediating endogenous variables as well as exogenous variables, organizational climate variables indicated the strongest effects on worker burnout
- Predicting worker burnout:
  - Work pressure: TE=.52, DE=.37, IE=.15
  - Task planning and efficiency: TE= -.29, DE= -.16, IE= -.12
  - Sense of control on the job: TE=DE= -.29
  - Age: TE= -.23, DE= -.16, IE= -.07
  - Supervisory relationship: TE=DE= -.07



# Results from SEM

- Among mediating endogenous variables, worker's sense of control on the job directly reduced worker burnout (St. =  $-.29$ ), while supervisory relationship did not directly significant impact on burnout (St. =  $-.07$ , ns)
- Supervisory relationship was substantially correlated with worker's sense of control on the job ( $r = .34$ )
- Supervisory relationship might influence worker burnout through relationship with sense of control on the job



# Conclusion

- Two constructs of organizational climate, organizational efficiency and work pressure, were better predictors for worker burnout than supervisory relationship
- Organizational climate eliminates previously existing relationship between supervisory relationship and worker burnout
- Worker's perceived sense of control on the job was an important predictor for worker burnout, and mediates the impact of organizational climate on burnout; supervisory relationship does not



# To Empower Workers

- Create work settings that provide participatory management and allow workers to make independent decisions
- Provide advanced training and support for actualizing special interests and talents of workers



# To Improve Organizational Climate

- Create work settings that emphasize advanced planning and getting work done efficiently
- Focus on results but with reasonable workload demands

