INTRODUCTION

Different aspects of job stressors have been linked to burnout among employees [1]. However, to our knowledge, none of the studies on burnout employed the cognitive ergonomic approach that quantifies the burden of stressors on human resources [2]. In addition, the results of studies which address experience of burnout and the contribution of different socio-demographic variables to burnout are inconsistent. So far, the research findings indicate that singles especially men are more exposed to burnout than married individuals, and people with higher educational level experience more job burnout [1, 3]. Meta-analytic findings also indicate small negative correlation between employee age and emotional exhaustion, and a small negative correlation between years of experience in a field and emotional exhaustion [4]. Regarding gender differences women are slightly more emotionally exhausted than male while men are somewhat more depersonalized [5].

AIM

Our study aimed to develop a prediction model of employees burnout that includes both job stressors and socio-demographic variables.

METHODS

To examine the relation between burnout, stress dimensions and socio-demographic variables, two hierarchical multiple regression analysis were carried out with the four subscales of burnout as dependent variables (Table 3). As independent variables OSI stress dimensions were entered first (step 1), followed by the basic socio-demographic data + gender, age, education (step 2), marital status, children, elder care, drops of health problems in the last year (step 4) and basic employment characteristics – type of employment, type of contract, number of hours in the last year and psychosocial factors in emotional exhaustion. Stress dimensions and basic socio-demographic data (gender, age, education) significantly contributed to burnout dimensions.

Significant predictors of disengagement dimension included OSI stress dimensions underload and high demands, gender and education (Table 4); higher disengagement is experienced by male employees with higher education and lower scores on stress dimensions under load (β = 0.168) and high demands (β = 0.284). The way high demand high demands and education are also significant predictors of exhaustion dimension; male employees that experience less stress on dimension high demands (β = -0.205) and have higher education level, experience more exhaustion.

RESULTS

A total of 413 Slovenian employees in different occupations filled out General Form of Occupational Stress Index (OSI, Belků & Savic, 2006) questionnaire and Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI, Demerouti et al., 2003).

The General OSI Questionnaire [2] is applicable to workers of any occupational profile. It measures seven stress dimensions (underload, high demand, strictness, external time pressure, aversive physical exposures, symbolic aversiveness, and conflict or uncertainty) at different levels of information transmission (simulation, control, decision-making and output/ task performance). Each element of the OSI is scored on a scale from 0 to 2, with zero being “not present” and 2 as “strongly present. The sum of the factor scores comprises the total OSI score, which is an attempt to quantitate the overall burden upon the human operator of a given set of working conditions.

The Oldenburg Burnout [6] measures two dimensions of burnout: exhaustion and disengagement. The exhaustion subscale refers to general feelings of emptiness, overtaxing from work, a strong need for rest, and a state of physical exhaustion. Disengagement subscale refers to distancing oneself from the object and the content of one’s work and to negative, cynical attitudes toward one’s work in general. Each subscale includes four positively worded and four negatively worded items that are scored on a four-point scale from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4), so that higher scores indicate a higher level of burnout.

Information on the following sociodemographic factors was collected: turnover intention, job tenure, type of employment, gender, age, education level, marital status, children, elder care, health problems in the last 12 months.

Hierarchically moderated multiple regressions were used to analyze the relationship between job stressors, socio-demographic variables and burnout.

Table 3. Prediction of burnout dimensions by stress dimensions and selected socio-demographic variables (Multiple Linear Regression Analysis, hierarchical method).

Table 4. Model 2 for dependent variable disengagement (Multiple Linear Regression analysis, enter method).

CONCLUSIONS

The present study is one of the first that uses cognitive ergonomic approach to examine relatedness of stress and burnout. It also includes a hierarchical mode of socio-demographic variables to examine their relationship with burnout. Results suggest that certain stress dimensions are significant predictors of burnout, but account for relatively small proportion of explained variance. The study also replicates past research on the importance of psychosocial stressors, especially gender and education [1, 3], in the development of burnout. Moreover it suggests that there are also other predictors of employee burnout that we did not take into account. Nonetheless, it points to a need to further examine which factors arising from broader socio-demographic context are important predictors of burnout and should therefore be implemented in burnout prevention strategies.

Acknowledgments

The presented study is a part of "Fostering Programmes for Employees and Employers for Reducing Work-related Stress and Its Adverse Effects (ISSE-05", partly co-funded by the European Social Fund). This programme is being carried out within the framework of the Operational Programme for Human Resource Development for the period 2007-2013, development of the strategy for human resource management, and priority orientation on the Promotion of development of new employment opportunities.

References