

## The Effect of the Perceptions of Correctional Officers of Job-related Affective Well-being on Tendency to Leave the Job

Serpil Aytac<sup>1\*</sup>, Salih Dursun<sup>2</sup> and Zeynep Aca<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Uludag University, Bursa, Turkey

<sup>2</sup>Karadeniz Technical University, Trabzon, Turkey

### Abstract

The present study aimed to examine the relationships between the tendency to leave a job and the subtypes of the Job-related Affective Well-being Scale (JAWS) application, which was designed by Katwyk et al. This study examined the relationship between the perceptions of correctional officers of job well-being and their tendency to leave the job by surveying a sample of 154 correctional officers employed in the city prison system in Bursa, Turkey. The case of correctional officers is important to today's human resource management because the turnover rate for correctional officers is significantly higher than that of other public employees. The main hypothesis of the study was based on the expectation that the four subtypes of JAWS would show consistent and predictable correlations with a tendency to leave the job. The relationships between a tendency to leave the job and the four subtypes and the total JAWS were evaluated by correlation analyses and stepwise regression analysis. The results were discussed in relation to the validity of the Turkish version of JAWS. The findings of the present study showed significant relationships between a tendency to leave the job and Job Well-Being.

**Keywords:** Job-related affective well-being scale (JAWS); Tendency to leave job; Prison; Correctional officers; Turnover intention; Well-being

### Introduction

Pressures and difficulties that an individual is exposed to in their working life, which forms a significant part of a person's life, and work-related stress are important factors affecting an individual's physical and emotional health. These factors, which negatively affect health, also have a negative effect on job-related well-being. When job-related well-being is affected negatively, then this causes dissatisfaction with the job and unwillingness [1] and results in emotional states such as wanting to leave the job [2].

For an individual to have positive job-related well-being, the work undertaken by an individual must be healthy in all respects. Occupational health was defined by the ILO and WHO Joint Committee as 'occupational health is the achievement and maintenance of the highest level possible of physical, emotional and social welfare for all employees, whatever job they are doing, the prevention of health problems related to the working conditions and working in occupational environments appropriate to the physical and biological capacities of the employees. In short, it aims to provide a status of people suitable for the work and work suitable for the people [3]. Thus, the relationship between occupational health and the job-related well-being of an individual was emphasized.

### Literature Review

Prisons constitute one of the most effective means of combating crime. Therefore, the most significant property of a prison is that it has the institutional function of providing punishment for those who have committed crimes. Prisons are places where they may be thousands of people living with mental disorders. Correctional officers who are dealing with these people with problems encounter many problems themselves in this working environment. These may include shift working, economic difficulties and exposure to aggressive behavior from prisoners [4]. All of these problems have a negative effect on the work-related feelings of those working under difficult conditions, such as in a prison.

Correctional officers have to undertake their duties under high security precautions and in a closed environment among many criminals. Prisoners are individuals who have been excluded from society. They are living life behind locked doors away from society and those they primarily come into contact with are the correctional officers and other prison staff.

In research at both the national and international level, there are findings of work environment-related behavioral disorders in correctional officers [4,5-11]. Adverse emotional and psychological effects of the effort/reward imbalance have also been observed, such as emotional exhaustion, psychosomatic complaints, depressive symptoms and mild psychiatric disorders [12-15].

In addition, correctional officers face many more problems such as low pay, threats and violence directed towards them by prisoners, unpaid overtime, workload and society's negative view of correctional officers. In a study conducted in the USA between 1990 and 1995, despite the relative difficulty of the work, correctional officers received low pay and it was determined that they had a constant fear of being called to undertake extra working hours [16]. In the same study, it was also determined there was a 30% increase in violence directed at correctional officers by prisoners and when police officers were not included, correctional officers were exposed to non-fatal violent events at a higher rate than other occupational groups [16].

In some research conducted in Turkey, similar results have been noticed. In a study of 6369 prison staff in Erzurum from May 2010 to September 2011, 86% of the participants were correctional officers, of

\*Corresponding author: Serpil Aytac, Uludag University, Bursa, Turkey, Tel: +902242940072; E-mail: [saytac@uludag.edu.tr](mailto:saytac@uludag.edu.tr)

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whom 64% had a substance addiction and 97% reported the addiction to be ongoing. When the study group was considered in general, anxiety was determined at a minimum level in 37%, mild in 23% and severe in 21% [17]. In a study by Kaya et al. [18], rates of psychiatric disorders seen in correctional officers were determined to be higher than in the general population. While nicotine addiction was the most common psychiatric disorder at 28.1%, major depression was observed in 10.4% and specific phobias in 9.3%.

### Well-being and job-related well-being

Many words and concepts have been used to describe well-being, including happiness, joy, satisfaction, prosperity and quality of life. Personal well-being is the evaluation of one's life in his/her own perspective. This perspective depends on self-evaluation, positive and/or negative emotions and life satisfaction.

An individual's cognitive, personal and conditional characteristics are assessed with different models in order to explain the structural design of well-being.

Subjective well-being is an area of psychology which evaluates the personal well-being situation. Evaluations regarding the intensity and type of human emotions can be categorized in two areas; cognitive concepts (for example life and job satisfaction) and having pleasure are on one side and sadness, fury, frustration and similar negative emotions on the other side. This evaluation can be applied to a whole life or part of it. Positive and negative emotions were separated into different sub-groups by Russell [19] with the use of a multi-dimensional technique.

Davidson [20] and Watson et al. [21] pointed out that different emotional groups have a different effect on the well-being status.

In the model developed by Russell [19], it was aimed to explain the areas of positive and negative emotions with a model separated into 4 parts. The emotions of an individual separated in the sub-groups were combined in the contrast of pleasure and misery. Within the area of pleasure, were the sub-areas of excitement and contentment and in the area of misery, depression and distress. Through this sub-division, the emotions affecting the sense of well-being are revealed (Figure 1).

In Warr's model [22], different emotions were found to be responsible for job-related well-being and the emotional aspects of the two dimensional model have been discussed in respect of dependence and independence. Katwyk et al. [23] established a scale to measure job-related well-being (JAWS). This scale can be divided into four sub groups of: High Pleasure-High Arousal (HPHA), High Pleasure-Low Arousal (HPLA), Low Pleasure-Low Arousal (LPLA), and Low Pleasure-High Arousal (LPHA). These four dimensions are obtained from the distribution of the emotions among the two axes of pleasure and arousal. The axis of pleasure can assess the general job-related happiness and the arousal axis the motivation of a person. For example, at the intersection of positive emotional situation with high

arousal, a person shows a happy and active picture (items of the scale: cheerful, elated, ecstatic, enthusiastic, and inspired). At the intersection of positive emotional situation with low arousal, a person shows a peaceful but passive picture (items of the scale: satisfied, content, at ease, proud, pleased). In contrast, a person with low pleasure and high arousal is anxious and tense (items of the scale: disgusted, frightened, furious, frustrated, and intimidated) and a person with low pleasure and low arousal shows a passive picture without motivation (items of the scale: fatigued, depressed, bored, confused, and miserable).

A Turkish version of JAWS was developed by Bayram et al. [24] which was calculated to have a Cronbach alpha value of 0.93. In the same way as the original version, the Turkish version of JAWS consists of four sub-scales: High Pleasure/High Arousal (HPHA); High Pleasure/Low Arousal (HPLA); Low Pleasure/High Arousal (LPHA); and Low Pleasure/Low Arousal (LPLA). These four dimensions were derived from the distribution of the scale items, indicating emotion in two main dimensions (i.e. high/low pleasure and high/low arousal).

In this study, the respondents were asked to evaluate 30 job-related affective statements in terms of how their current job has made them feel over the past 30 days.

It was aimed to investigate a group of Turkish prison officers in respect of job-related emotional perceptions and to assess their reactions in terms of a tendency to leave the job. Thus, the effect on the tendency to leave the job of the structural properties of the above-described four-dimensional job-related affective well-being scale were researched in prison staff working in the difficult conditions of a prison.

### Research Methods

This study was performed in the metropolitan city of Bursa, Turkey in 2014 and utilized a descriptive, cross-sectional, self-reported questionnaire. Participants were asked to state their demographic characteristics (age, gender, marital status and years in practice) and to complete the Job Related Affective Well-Being Scale (JAWS) and Turnover Intention Scale (TIS).

### Participants

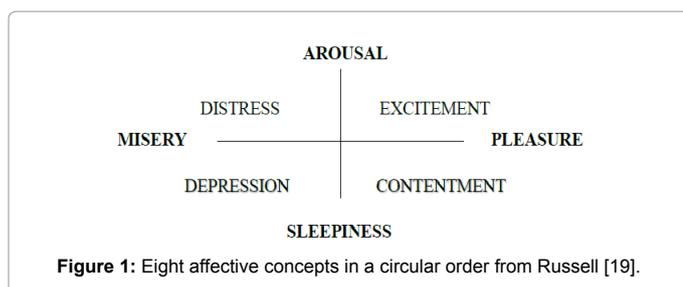
From a total of 207 distributed questionnaires, 154 were completed which gave a response rate of 75%. The study population comprised 84.3% males and 15.7% females with a mean age of 38.18 ± 12.78 years (range 23 to 64 years) this was similar to the age range of the entire agency correctional officer complement. The average tenure (i.e., years of employment as a correctional officer) for this sample was 7.50 ± 6.41 years.

### Measurement instruments

The study used the job related affective well-being scale (JAWS) and Turnover Intention Scale (TIS)

**Personal information form:** This comprised 7 questions regarding employee age, gender, marital status, education, level and years of work.

**Job-related affective well-being scale (JAWS):** To measure the employee perceptions of job-related well-being, JAWS (Job Related Affective Well-Being Scale) as developed by Katwyk et al. [23] was used. Turkish validity and reliability studies were applied by Bayram et al. [24]. JAWS is a 30-item scale designed to assess people's emotional reactions to their job. Each item is an emotion, and respondents are asked how often they have experienced each at work over the prior 30 days. Responses are made with a five-point scale with anchors never, rarely, sometimes, quite often, extremely often or always. The JAWS



includes a wide variety of emotional experiences, both negative and positive and is divided into four sub-dimensions of; High Pleasure-High Arousal (HPHA), High Pleasure-Low Arousal (HPLA), Low Pleasure-Low Arousal (LPLA), Low Pleasure-High Arousal (LPHA).

**Turnover intention scale:** To measure the tendency to leave the job, the Turnover Intention Scale was used. This scale was developed by Blau et al. [25] and reliability and validity for the Turkish version were applied by Deliorman et al. [26]. The scale has a total of 4 items and responses are given as 5 - point Likert type.

To measure the relationship between the level of job-related affective wellbeing and tendency to leave the job in the prison staffs of this study, multiple statistical analyses were applied as correlation analyses and stepwise regression analyses. Data were analyzed using SPSS 16.0 software [27].

### Procedures

The survey was conducted on a sample of correctional officers at two state prisons between 13 July and 27 July 2014 in a major city in Turkey [28-30]. Printed questionnaires were completed anonymously by the participants. The questionnaire in a sealed envelope was distributed to 207 voluntary participants selected by random sampling. Two days later the completed questionnaires were returned to the researchers by the prison manager. 154 completed questionnaires were returned giving a response rate of 75%. After cleaning, only 149 questionnaires were used for analysis [31].

### Results

Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation and internal consistency reliability (coefficient alpha) values are shown for all study scales in Table 1.

The reliability alpha coefficients of the all the scales ranged between 0.80 and 0.96, and all the coefficients were at acceptable limits [32,33].

Correlations were calculated by evaluating the sizes of the scales (Total JAWS, HPHA, HPLA, LPHA, LPLA, and Turnover Intention Scale) to see the associations between JAWS and DASS (Table 2). The Pearson correlation coefficients in Table 2 show the statistical relationships between JAWS and TIS. The associations between Turnover Intention Scale and total JAWS and sub-scales were negative except for LPHA and LPLA, which were positive [34,35].

As can be seen from the tables, all the correlation coefficients were confirmed as expected. The correlations within themselves of the total well-being perception dimension and the positive perception total variables were completely consistent with the model developed by Katwyk et al. [23]. The negative correlations within the JAWS group, as expected, were negative at a statistically high level (0.42-0.90) (Table 2).

The total, negative total, positive total correlations and the correlations between HPHA, HPLA, LPHA, LPLA and turnover intention were calculated. As seen in Table 2, all correlation coefficients were found to be as expected. A statistically significant high correlation

Scales	Sub dimension	N	N. item	Mean	St.D.	C.Alpha
<b>Total JAWS</b>		<b>147</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>90.80</b>	<b>27.87</b>	<b>0.96</b>
<b>Sub dimensions</b>	HPHA	144	5	11.78	5.07	<b>0.89</b>
	HPLA	144	5	12.37	4.77	<b>0.81</b>
	LPHA	148	5	18.68	5.54	<b>0.89</b>
	LPLA	148	5	18.31	5.58	<b>0.89</b>
	Positive emotions	144	15	37.63	14.00	<b>0.95</b>
	Negative emotions	146	15	32.62	15.63	<b>0.96</b>
<b>TIS</b>	Turnover Intention Scale	141	4	9.67	4.83	<b>0.80</b>

**Table 1:** Reliability analysis of the study instruments.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<b>(1)JAWS (Total)</b>							
<b>(2) HPHA</b>	.810(**)	1					
<b>(3) HPLA</b>	.758(**)	.771(**)	1				
<b>(4) LPLA</b>	-.850(**)	-.496(**)	-.412(**)	1			
<b>(5) LPHA</b>	-.849(**)	-.482(**)	-.413(**)	.894(**)	1		
<b>(6) Positive emotions</b>	.822(**)	.940(**)	.878(**)	-.475(**)	-.479(**)	1	
<b>(7) Negative emotions</b>	-.861(**)	-.499(**)	-.414(**)	.964(**)	.965(**)	-.480(**)	1
<b>(8) TIS</b>	-.603(**)	-.396(**)	-.408(**)	.619(**)	.596(**)	-.415(**)	.612(**)

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). p < 0.01.

#### Note

HPHA: High Pleasure High Arousal (cheerful, elated, ecstatic, enthusiastic, inspired).

HPLA: High Pleasure Low Arousal (satisfied, content, at ease, proud, pleased).

LPHA: Low Pleasure High Arousal (disgusted, frightened, furious, frustrated, intimidated).

LPLA: Low Pleasure Low Arousal (fatigued, depressed, bored, confused, miserable).

Positive emotions: (cheerful, enthusiastic, satisfied, proud, pleased etc.).

Negative emotions: (fatigued, depressed, bored, confused, miserable etc.).

Total JAWS: Job Related Affective Wellbeing Scale.

TIS: Turnover Intention Scale.

**Table 2:** Correlations among JAWS and sub dimensions and Turnover Intention Scales.

Step	Independent variable	B	Beta	t	p	F	R <sup>2</sup>
1	LPLA	.135	.619	9.356	.000	87.528	.383
2	LPLA	.119	.544	7.542	.000	48.102	.407
	HPLA	-.044	-.173	-2.395	.018		

(P<0.01) Dependent variable: Turnover Intention

**Table 3:** Stepwise multiple regression analysis.

was determined between Turnover Intention and JAWS total scores ( $r=-0.60$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). The correlative similarities and differences are shown in the theoretical model of Katwyk et al. [23].

At this stage of the study, stepwise multiple correlation analysis was applied to determine which dimension of JAWS affected the intention to leave the job. These analyses were applied primarily with the dependent variable of intention to leave the job, then with stepwise additions of the other independent variables [18,36-39] (Table 3).

According to Table 3, it was determined that the LPLA and HPLA variables significantly explained the variable of intention to leave the job. The total coefficient explaining the variance of these variables was found to be 41%. In other words, a total change of 41% in the variable of tendency to leave the job was seen to be explained by the LPLA and HPLA variables [40,41].

When the Beta values in the model obtained at the second stage were examined, the LPLA ( $\beta=0.544$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and HPLA ( $\beta=-0.173$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) variables respectively were determined to have relative importance in the explanation of the intention to leave the job. According to these results, LPLA has a positive effect on the intention to leave the job and HPLA has a negative effect. The variables of HPHA and LPHA were found to have no statistically significant effect on the intention to leave the job ( $p>0.05$ ) [42].

## Result and Discussion

Starting from the data produced by JAWS, which separated the groups of prison officers, the findings clearly revealed at a serious level the differentiation in the tendency to leave the job. The findings of tendency to leave the job and the related intensity were consistent with the model based on the scale and were strong evidence in respect of the accuracy of the motivational approach of Katwyk et al. [23]. For example, the mean values of the tendency to leave the job of the LPHA and LPLA groups were reflected in the motivational tendencies of these well-being types. While there was a noticeable difference in the LPHA group which is based on the demonstration of tension, this difference was closed in the LPLA group in which withdrawal and introversion are emphasized. Therefore, rather than considering JAWS only as a measurement scale of perceptions, as it can be said to encompass the data of tendency to leave the job, this is a pleasing result in terms of determining the validity of JAWS.

On the other hand, according to the findings, the correlations between JAWS and the tendency to leave the job total scores were negative and statistically significant ( $r=-0.60$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Low pleasure/high arousal (LPHA) and low pleasure/low arousal (LPLA) variations that describe negative emotional states show a positive and significant relationship with tendency to leave the job values. The highest mean score was obtained for the high pleasure/low arousal (HPLA) status, which can be interpreted to mean that the study group was pleased with their job but not motivated.

The negative emotional perceptions related to a prison officer's job are associated with reactions in terms of tendency to leave the job.

Therefore, it is critical to consider the factors affecting the prison officer's job and job-related stimuli.

In conclusion, the job-related negative emotional perceptions of prison officers were associated with reactions in terms of turnover intensity and further studies that focus on these issues in a qualitative manner are needed. In respect of the prison officer's job-related affective well-being, it was seen as a dirty job. The negative emotions related to the job could be a reason for high turnover and absenteeism or decreased job satisfaction, job involvement and job performance. These factors will increase the costs of the judicial and penal services.

In future studies, the use of JAWS together with other scales which directly measure stress in the workplace and job satisfaction, and attachment to the job and organization, could be considered to be indicators for several studies, especially to understand individuals working in prisons.

## Limitations and future directions

There were two important limitations to this study. First, the population for the research was taken from just 2 prisons in a large industrialized city in Turkey, so it is not possible to generalize the data obtained for all prison employees. The other limitation is that the results are limited to the individual's perceptions of job-related well-being. When evaluating the results, different perceptions of different people should be considered in respect of the factors related to the work undertaken in the workplace environment. Future studies in this area in different prisons would cover all aspects of the problem.

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