



Review article

The interplay between psychological well-being, stress, and burnout: Implications for translators and interpreters

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ABSTRACT

As far as translation is concerned, translators and interpreters are required to cope with multiple challenges during their careers such as managing time constraints related to performing their job. Indeed, a translation job is a challenging task that is very demanding cognitively as it entails deep concentration that also involves the different psychological aspects of humans. Such complicated operations including linguistic, and cognitive ones can induce overwhelming stress and anxiety. Similarly, burnout has been the main issue in this context, and it needs to be investigated in this domain. In recent years, an increasing attention has been drawn to translators' health and well-being as it is a key sustainable development goal and an essential prerequisite to coping with stress. Correspondingly, studies have shown that people's well-being has a constructive impact on their performance and success. It is worth noting that the present literature can bring about useful benefits to educational institutes, and other stakeholders and authorities working in the educational arena as the research findings help them to reflect on the contributions of positive emotions to learning, which results in a reduction in the level of stress and burnout and hence educational flourishing. This review makes an effort to arrange for some implications for translators and interpreters.

1. Introduction

Today, the world has changed into a globalized community thanks to the widespread use of different skills, and the ability to communicate with others is viewed as one of the main needs of humankind [1,2]. One of the foremost channels of communication is through translating and interpreting from one language into another language, with cultural norms and exchange, background information, as well as skills and talent constituting the foundation of translation and interpretation [3]. Undoubtedly, in today's world, people and societies are witnessing remarkable revolutions due to the breathtaking developments in communication and information technologies. Indeed, the speed of scientific and technological innovations has been made possible, in part, due to the distribution of scientific and technological information by translators and interpreters [4]. [5] notes that in this field, most attention is paid to sociology instead of psychology while it also seems essential to pay attention to the psychological aspects.

Individuals usually encounter multiple negative emotions and feelings, including stress induced by academic conditions, and anxiety which influence their overall well-being [6]. Stress may emanate from a variety of factors, including the individual's behavior, the inability to manage time, the complex nature of tasks, and job insecurity [7]. Given that interpreting is viewed as a complex cognitive activity, stress also constitutes a part of the interpreter's professional life [8]. Consequently, one of the best treatments for these problems can be provided in the area of psychology which seeks to individually cure each disorder and issue. Nowadays,

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psychology has found its way into almost all academic fields, with translation and interpretation being no exception [6]. Indeed, many translation works and problems have been examined from a psychological perspective [9]. Besides linguistic proficiency, an interpreter or translator should serve as an effective mediator to know and work out the audience's expectations and feelings. Interpreters should also understand how to communicate effectively with other parties [10]. Moreover, the negative feelings experienced by translators and interpreters in various situations have caught the attention of many researchers in recent years [11–13]. Since these researchers have focused on negative emotions, more studies should be conducted to shed light on the role of stress to people's decisions of whether or not to continue or quit the translation job [13]. Furthermore, interpreting is seen as a highly stressful job that results in physical weariness, backache, and troubling eyes [8,14]. Given that anxiety triggers decentralization, anxious translators fail to focus their attention on the source text; therefore, they cannot yield a quality translation as the lack of concentration prevents them from figuring out the original content [15].

Moreover, job burnout is described as an affective response as a result of constantly experiencing job stress [16] and it is one of the consequences of stress, which is concerned with the working conditions [17,18]. Based on many studies conducted in mainly English-speaking countries, burnout emanates from working conditions, interpersonal relationships, conflicting roles, and workload [17]. This construct is mostly seen among individuals whose jobs involve providing human services and require significant human contact [19]. Drawing on Freudenberg's conceptualization of job burnout in 1974, this construct has caught the attention of many researchers [16]. have described job burnout as an individual's affective reaction as a result of experiencing overwhelming job stress. Indeed, burnout is believed to be an outcome of working conditions commonly seen in people whose job involves providing human services that entail significant human contact [19].

Translating and interpreting can induce both positive and negative emotions in translators and interpreters. Indeed, their job entails coping with various emotions and managing them; otherwise, their works and translation products would be impacted negatively. Given the fact that emotions and being aware of them play a crucial role in human functioning [20], they potentially can influence the outcome of translation; therefore, the affective aspects of translators and interpreters contribute to the quality of translation and interpretation. As with other professionals, professional translators are likely to experience these external pressures so a variety of conditions and variables in the work setting including time constraints, complex technologies, and competition have been shown to jeopardize these professionals [21].

Well-being is seen as an essential requirement for sustainable development, as well as a crucial pre-condition for good health, which is described as a state of health, including mental and physical health; that is, well-being involves more than being well and not ill [22]. Psychological Well-being has been considered as an important component of professional life, with work being seen as a pillar of individual well-being [23]. In the research on organizational management, the terms like job-related stress, occupational stress, and stress related to work are used by researchers to spot the various effects including emotional and psychological ones, as well as stress emanating from job-related activities. This negatively influences the staff's well-being and performance to adapt to the dynamic nature of translation and to effectively perform different tasks and projects, translators should foster their mental health and well-being as this allows them to do their assignments effectively [24]. Notwithstanding the lonely and stressful nature of translation [25], many translators and interpreters are not aware of mental health risks and how to protect psychological well-being.

The concept of stress concerning translation has been covered and it is assumed that this kind of stress might influence job performance [14]. Yet, the majority of investigations on stress have been carried out on oral interpreters, rather than translators of written texts. It is generally agreed on the part of researchers that interpreting induces stress [8]. Also increasing attention has been paid to the construct of "stress" experienced by some scholars; however, few studies [5,10,26] have been conducted on the psychological dimensions, including health, and well-being, perceived stress, and burnout. Nevertheless, no review study has scrutinized the connection among these concepts concerning translators or interpreters.

2. Review of the literature

2.1. Stress, burnout, and psychological well-being

Translation sometimes emerges as a short-lived and low-paid job [27], with numerous stressors influencing the quality of the translations and the success of professional translators. Some professional translators experience job-related stress due to being treated unfairly by agencies, poor salaries, and a prospect of job insecurity in the future [25]. Furthermore, research proof indicates that the translation area involves part-time workers and freelancers, with part-time translators and freelancers accounting for 60% and 50% to 89%, respectively [28]. These numbers vary from one country to another country, indicating the status of translation as a career [27]. Translators' stress is defined as a state in which the work to be done is highly demanding so that the demands placed upon them go beyond the internal or external supports and coping strategies at their disposal [11]. All people report negative feelings related to their job conditions (e.g., overwhelming pressure, depression, burnout, and low self-confidence) [29]. Indeed, people report these negative feelings prior to even starting their job, and such negative elements are likely to be the main reasons for them to give up their profession later on [30]; moreover, burnout is normally represented as sentiments of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization [31]. Indeed, enthusiastic weariness is an element of burnout an individual faces from the inside and is described as a condition of consumption and weakness (i.e., feelings of being overstretched and exhausted with one's work [19]. The individuals' lack of concentration results in a negative demeanor toward other colleagues in their job circle. It is expected that people suffering from a lack of concentration give up their job, feel lonely, would be fearful, would be estranged, and fail to express compassion [16]. Psychological well-being enables individuals to cope with stressful circumstances, function effectively, and make a useful contribution to society [32, 33]. This signals that factors other than the lack of mental illness or disorder are required for enjoying time and life and for having

positive emotions [34]. That is, an individual should enjoy physical, mental, and social well-being; therefore, perceived well-being indicates how people feel, perform, and evaluate the quality of their life, indicating a key term in the definition and characterization of health.

2.2. Stress

Today, the investigation of job-related stress is the focus of the attention of many researchers working in the area of psychology. Accordingly, investigations have been carried out in different countries and researchers have provided broad definitions of occupational stress. For example [35], characterizes occupational stress as an emotional malfunction experienced by a person, leading to a disorganized personality and behavior. Along the same line [36], defines job-related stress as negative responses that take place when the job requires conditions that exceed the individual's capabilities. Seemingly, both characterizations of occupational stress emphasize human responses reflected in their physical or emotional state. Therefore, occupational stress emanates from work or its environment which may impact workers negatively. Some studies have been carried out on stress related to translation in recent decades; yet the majority of these studies have been conducted on interpreters, rather than translators who deal with the translation of written texts. For example, in one of the occasional studies on the translation of written texts [25], administered a researcher-made questionnaire to study job-related stress and satisfaction with their job in a sample of 474 translators and interpreters. All in all, the results of this study revealed that professional translators grapple with moderate to high levels of stress related to their job.

Notwithstanding a large body of studies showing the high levels of job-related stress in various areas, inadequate investigations have focused on the stress concerning translation and interpretation. In another study [37], examined whether or not translators underwent adversary feelings, including too much stress. The study also sought to uncover whether or not deadlines influenced the quality of their translation work and if they entertained the idea of choosing other jobs within a year. The findings showed that the translators who experienced destructive stress in rare cases evaluated their status positively. As expected, the participants who chose to change jobs perceived their status negatively. As far as occupational stress is concerned, some studies have used interviews and surveys to examine this type of stress [18,38,39]. They have found high levels of stress in interpreters. In their study [40], examined a sample of interpreters in Taiwan. The results showed that 85% of participants suffered from high-stress levels.

2.3. Burnout

A growing reaction to a constant stressful factor in the work environment is labeled as burnout which has the following symptoms: emotional weariness, lack of concentration, and underachievement. It seems that learner burnout has a serious effect on learners' education outcomes [16]. Burnout is described as a feeling that takes place due to long-term job-related stress, particularly, among the staff that provides human services (e.g., instructors, translators, interpreters). For some reason, all individuals may find their job stressful [41]. The three most common symptoms of learner burnout are as follows: emotional weariness, pessimistic, and expert efficacy [42]. Indeed, academic burnout refers to one's weariness which emanates from overwhelming learning conditions (fatigue), complacent and disorganized behavior about school assignments or educators (pessimism), and perceived incompetence or perceived failure in learning (inefficacy) which is also concerned with comparing oneself with other successful students [43,44]. [16] characterized emotional weariness as an important sign of burnout. Depersonalization is concerned with unpleasant, repetitive obsessions and feelings concerning learners or colleagues, which is a sign of teacher burnout. Decreased personal accomplishment is concerned with negative self-assessment. It has also to do with a general perception that their actions and works are no longer purposeful.

The psychology literature has made a connection between stress and low level of job satisfaction, emotional weariness, desire to give up, and compassion fatigue [45]. Emotional fatigue appears in people who go through emotional distress due to being exposed to the victims of trauma [46,47]. As an internal state experienced by many people, burnout can have many indicators related to occupation, such as absence, failure to achieve objectives, and turnover [48,49]. Moreover, investigations have also revealed that burnout experienced by translators and also interpreters may result in early job withdrawal, which is a growing cause for concern [18,39].

2.4. Psychological well-being

According to a definition given by The World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is viewed as a kind of psychological well-being whereby the individual can use his/her capabilities. As a component of Positive Psychology (PP), well-being is described as positive and enduring traits that help people to make progress and develop [33,50]. Well-being is viewed from two perspectives, namely, hedonic or eudemonic [51]. A reason for the improvement in well-being is that it has to do with more than feeling healthy. Put it another way, people who assess their lives effectively are satisfied [52]. The individuals who report higher levels of well-being enjoy positive feelings and engage in positive activities. They have a positive view of the entire educational cycle [53].

According to the self-determination theory of motivation, a person's competence is concerned with some psychological needs, such as well-being and satisfaction in their lives [51]. Based on this theory, it can be concluded that those translators who enjoy perceived competence are more likely to persist, engage, and intrinsically motivated; therefore, they would perform more effectively and would enjoy a higher level of psychological well-being in the process of translation that it brings about success in their professions. Indeed, enhancing translators' psychological well-being is likely to increase their satisfaction with their job. Based on the review of the literature, it can be stated that translators should be helped to develop translation competence and efficacy as these two characteristics, their motivation and job satisfaction, were found to be the antecedents of their well-being. This can be fostered by creating opportunities for translators to increase their knowledge about pedagogy. Moreover, administrators can enable translators to develop more

positive beliefs about their capabilities in translation.

3. Conclusions

Translation has to do with producing and selecting; indeed, translation is seen as a problem-solving process that takes place in translators' minds [26]. The translation is seen as a difficult process that takes place in translators' minds. This difficult process is the result of the problems associated with converting text from one language to the other [54]. In this context, cultural differences, grammatical dissimilarities, and lexical equivalences, among others, are the contributors to these issues, which should be dealt with by a translator. Indeed, a translator must deal with translating problems to translate smoothly [3]. The investigations of translation date back many decades ago; yet the exploration of the psychological factors related to the translator is a new area of research. As translation is seen as a problem-solving endeavor, how translators cope with this problem-solving activity influences the level of anxiety and stress experienced by the translator [55]. Both translators of texts and interpreters are exposed to various job stressors. In a working situation where there are time constraints, and translators have to use complex technology and face intense competition, there is a sense of perceived threat. Other factors contributing to an increase in stress are job insecurity, low status, and low payment [27], these stressful factors influence the quality of translation products. Translators frequently encounter situations that may impact their emotional and psychological well-being negatively [56].

Considering the important role of psychological factors in cognitive and communicative activities, including translation and interpreting, some studies [8,18] reveal a relationship between different psychological variables (e.g., stress and burnout) and the quality of translation products. The results also indicated negative feelings and thoughts, including burnout. These negative states lead to a decrease in the quality of translation, impacting translators' health and well-being. Given the research results, the translation and interpretation training programs should take into account these factors to educate proficient and skillful translators and interpreters. From an instructive setting, it would be worthwhile to take on approaches that diminish stressors, that commonly influence individuals during the process of their job. Tactics such as negotiation and problem-solving were significant for developing and boosting well-being. Based on the previous research findings, emotional exhaustion is seen as a crucial determiner of an individual's well-being in a translation job. Given that fatigue emanates from being exposed to different troubling factors, newcomers in translation jobs need to predict such negative factors. Accordingly, they must try to mitigate them. The present investigation contributes to the literature related to translators' well-being and has implications for the programs aimed at enhancing translators' well-being to decrease their stress and burnout which results in more satisfaction.

4. Implications and suggestions for further research

This investigation also contributes to the literature related to job stress, burnout, and psychological well-being which has important pedagogical implications for both translator educators and translation students. For instance, translator educators can prepare tasks that enhance learners' coping strategies to manage their stress and cultivate emotional factors. Both translators and interpreters should be aware of themselves and know their adaptive reactions, as well as coping strategies when they face stressful circumstances and they should be guided when they are supposed to meet their various needs, including emotional and spiritual ones. Accordingly, they should be taught how to control their stress and how to find solutions for coping with challenging experiences that cause burnout. Translator educators are required to develop psychological resources and translators' psychological well-being by increasing specific areas of psychological capital in terms of self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and resilience via both continuing professional development prospects and explicit guidelines [21] since they influence better performance and less job burnout [57]. In the same vein, learners' awareness of the association between coping strategies, and emotional factors encourage them to invest more efforts in enhancing their translation quality. This is made possible by fostering their problem-solving strategies about their coping strategies and emotional factors. The present study sheds light on translation and interpreting and it also provides opportunities for them to deal with different issues that they currently face such as stress and burnout.

Given the essential role of psychological factors in translation and interpreting, the current study has important pedagogical implications for syllabus designers; more specifically, this study recommends adding psychological courses to the translation syllabus. Also, this investigation suggests that the stress and burnout experienced by interpreters and translators are important contributors to the quality of translation due to their significant roles. As a result, teachers need to motivate prospective translators to manage their destructive emotions and feelings (e.g., stress and burnout). Correspondingly, they must develop psychological strategies and techniques to decrease the level of their stress and enhance a calm situation in their classroom; moreover, the study also shows that translation trainers do well to give a psychological test, including an anxiety test prior to the translation course. This would help the translators' educators to understand their translator learners' stress and to take the appropriate remedial steps to mitigate the stress.

The outcome of this paper can be used by officials including policymakers, who take important decisions concerning instruction and learning, to direct the works of textbook writers, curriculum developers, and educators consistent with the desires and orientations of the translators and interpreters. By developing translation activities that are user-friendly and comprehensible, the instructors can reduce the volume of stress experienced by translation students in classes. Moreover, by putting forward instructions or supplementary materials for translation learners, the policy-makers and translation instructors pave the way for translation students to take on task-oriented activities when they face stressful situations. This enhances their executive and hierarchical problem-solving strategies to deal with their stress which brings about life satisfaction which is one of the main issues in well-being. Translation or interpreting training programs and trainers must make sure that translators and interpreters know the potential mental health risks associated with their job. They need to be aware of the necessity of enhancing their physical and mental well-being so that they can perform their tasks safely

and effectively.

The other translator variables, such as translators' workplace interactions, and socioeconomic class, and psychological variables such as (apprehension, grit, and self-efficacy) can be the focus of other studies. In addition, more studies need to be conducted on triangulating the outcome of the present studies through empirical research. The prospective research should deeply examine the impacts of life stressors on career progression among specific groups. In a nutshell, future studies can be done to investigate across regions to find out if such stressors become worse in different geographical areas.

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All authors listed have significantly contributed to the development and the writing of this article.

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No data was used for the research described in the article.

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Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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