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An Empirical Research on the Relationship Between Employee Boreout and Performance: Mediating Role of Procrastination

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to discover whether employee boreout was related to employee task performance and whether employee procrastination was mediating this relationship. In order to achieve that, a cross-sectional research has been conducted. The data were collected from 400 employees who work in a telecommunication company operating in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, using the survey technique, between the 16th of July and the 19th of August, 2022. Linear regression tests were used to analyze the collected data. Findings showed that there was a negative relationship between the crisis of meaning and task performance, job boredom and task performance, and the crisis of growth and task performance. This study also indicated that there was a positive relationship between procrastination and the crisis of meaning, job boredom, and the crisis of growth. Finally, it was revealed for the first time that procrastination was mediating the relationship between employee boreout and task performance.

Keywords: boreout, crisis of meaning, job boredom, crisis of growth, task performance, procrastination

INTRODUCTION

Organizational behavior is a multidisciplinary field that investigates how individuals behave in an organization as well as the organization's behavior itself, it focuses on stimulating innovation, supporting leadership, enhancing job satisfaction, and improving performance [1]. Which makes it study what could positively or negatively affect these behaviors because overall, they will be affecting the organizational outcomes. Employee performance is one of the most important behaviors that can affect achieving an organization's objectives. However, employees are exposed to different challenges that could negatively affect their performance like the boreout syndrome. This research aims to identify the relationship between employee boreout and performance with the mediating role of procrastination. This section will introduce the study by first discussing the term boreout and how it affects employees' performance followed by how procrastination has a mediating role in affecting employees' performance.

Unlike burnout, few people talk about boreout and even fewer people know it. Boreout can be defined as an impaired psychological condition caused by a reduction of excitement toward work [2]. The concept of boreout got the biggest attention from the two authors Rothlin and Werder in 2007 as they wrote the most famous book that covers this syndrome "Boreout!: Overcoming Workplace Demotivation". Boreout contains three dimensions 1) crisis of meaning

2) job boredom and, 3) crisis of growth. Understanding what boreout is and how it develops and happens in workers is important for individuals and organizations. For individuals, knowing that there is a problem makes it possible to solve it, whether the solution is leaving the job or confessing to a supervisor/manager. As [3] said that poor performance and turnover are outcomes of having employees with boreout. On the other hand, it is important for organizations and employers to understand this syndrome to avoid it as much as possible because it could be a consequence of a lack of support, empowerment, or even a lack of resources that in this case are embodied in conditions, assets, energies, relationships, and personal traits according to the conversion of resources theory [4]. Furthermore, it was noticed that employees who are suffering from boreout are not able to do their tasks consistently. They get themselves disturbed by chatting with their teammates or doing other stuff like browsing the internet. Especially with the sort of technology we have nowadays. An employee can look very busy by focusing on their computers or smart devices while they could be playing a video game or checking their social media accounts. This is considered one of the escaping strategies that employees use to fill their time during working hours instead of doing their actual tasks [5]. In other words, they procrastinate. Procrastination occurs when employees are aware of the harm postponing a task will cause and still do it. It could only lead to low productivity and as a result, poor performance [6]. It is interesting that employees know that they may get in trouble if they do not finish their tasks and continue to postpone them. The main reason behind this behavior is the lack of motivation to do these tasks. As [7] said, if employees do not see the meaning of their work and do not enjoy it, they will prefer to do something else even if it is meaningless like gossiping.

In the literature, employee boreout and performance have been addressed but without the mediating role of procrastination so this will be a new knowledge added to the literature. In addition, literature related to employee boreout and its effect on performance is scarce in the Middle East, and since this study was conducted in one of the Middle Eastern countries so this study could be a reference in this area.

This study aims to discover two things:
1) The relationship between employee boreout and employee performance.
2) Examining the mediating effect of procrastination on the relationship between employee boreout and employee performance.

BOREOUT

After 2000, boreout syndrome was recognized by different authors. [8] were the ones who introduced the term “boreout” for the first time [5]. The term is a component of two words, “bore” and “out,” presenting the meaning of being bored. When an employee gets bored, it becomes unmanageable, negatively affecting different dimensions. It also refers to the non-existence of worthwhile tasks resulting in stress levels [9]. The term can also be defined as an impaired psychological condition caused by a reduction of excitement toward work [2]. [8] clarified the boreout concept by comparing it to burnout, defined as emotional instability or mental health problems caused by being overstressed at work [10]. Although boreout and burnout sound similar to some extent, they are different concepts. While the latter develops from being overstressed [11], the former occurs from several reasons related to boredom and meaninglessness in the workplace.

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On the other hand, boreout and burnout also have similarities that appear while working in a team. For instance, a team member may take most of the tasks without leaving many to the rest of the team members. This will exhaust the person with too many duties and lead to burnout with time. At the same time, the ones with less work will start feeling bored, under-challenged, and disinterested, resulting in boreout [8].

Boreout and burnout concepts were linked to the conservation of resources theory which states that individuals seek to get, maintain, promote, and preserve the things they most value. This implies that people use essential resources to regulate themselves, their social relationships, and how they organize, act, and fit into the larger framework of organizations and culture [12]. The theory defines resources as conditions, assets, energies, relationships, and personal traits prized by persons or serving as a method of achieving these objects. From a boreout perspective, poor work excitement, absence of meaning, and lack of opportunity for growth are all pointers to a lack of resources. Employees may suffer from these resource reductions since they will have fewer resources to devote to their work. Technically speaking, these resources are in a cycle. The existence of resources may lead to new resources in the long term or the other way around. Individuals who suffer from boreout are likely to fall into a loss spiral because they are unable or unwilling to invest their remaining resources due to their boredom. As a result, if they are unable to make use of the resources, they already must obtain new ones or recoup from the ones they've lost. Hence, their level of satisfaction may suffer [9]. Burnout was also linked to the conservation of resources theory. The fear of losing or not gaining resources is presented as demand in this theory. When there are high demands on individuals meeting few resources provided, dysfunctional coping will be performed, resulting in burnout. Excessive exposure to few resources and high demands results in the depletion of other resources like energy, identity, and self-efficacy, which is referred to as the burnout process as emotional exhaustion is the first thing that happens, as stated in the conservation of resources theory. After that comes cynicism which is used as the coping style to face the shortage of resources and high demands, causing only a lack of self-esteem and starts loss of resources. In reverse, an environment with abundant resources and high demands will encourage employees to put more of their own time and energy into their job to meet those needs [13].

Dimensions of Boreout

There are three dimensions of boreout. They are explained as follows:

Crisis of Meaning (being disinterested)

This simply means that employees have no interest whatsoever in the job they are doing. It does not excite them or motivate them in any way. What they do at work is perceived by employees as meaningless, and some things that happen at work make it even harder for them. Like when the boss assigns them to a project and gives them the feeling of importance and cruciality of the project while they are not interested in it and feel no joy doing it [8].

Boredom

Most studies have categorized boredom as an emotional and, consequently, subjective condition of low arousal and discontent induced by a disinterest in an insufficiently pleasant environment [14]. Boredom occurs when there is nothing to do because everything has already been done or the employee has been doing the same tasks for a long time.

Crisis of Growth (being under-challenged)

A crisis of growth occurs when employees feel that they can do more than the given tasks. A crisis of growth contains two components such as quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative component is about how much work an employee has, and it is too little in this case. The qualitative part is about the content of the work, as they cannot reshape an assigned task or change the way it should be done. They feel that the organization can benefit more from their knowledge and experience [8]. Career growth opportunities have long been recognized as critical work resources that contribute to favorable organizational outcomes, such as greater organizational engagement and decreased turnover intention [15].

Escaping Strategies

Boreout leads employees to follow some escaping strategies to fill their free time. First, it is impossible to just sit at work without doing anything. They try to appear busy to avoid being fired. So, they do these two main things:

- Use working hours for personal purposes
- Keep the work on hold as much as possible

To achieve that, employees use some of the following strategies:

The Document Strategy

It refers to a situation when employees sit at their desks and pretend to work. For example, they can plan their next vacation or what they will do on the weekend. It does not matter as long as they appear busy.

The Pseudo-Commitment Strategy

In simple words, this strategy is about spending more time than usual at work. Because coming very early in the morning and leaving almost the last one will send the image that this person is very busy.

The Compression Strategy

It refers to a situation in which employees finish their duty but do not report to their manager. In that way, they can have extra time to do other things like chatting or even working on a private project without being assigned to another task.

The Flat Rolling Strategy

It could be considered the opposite of the compression strategy. Here, the employee intentionally spreads the time spent on one task to prevent getting assigned to another one any time soon [5].

Boreout Paradox

Some of the strategies are employed over a lengthy period of time when boreout syndrome is present. As a result, the employees can live with their current level of dissatisfaction. This is referred to as the "Boreout Paradox". Many reasons could stop employees from confronting their managers or supervisors about their boreout. One of them is the fear of the reaction. No employer would like to hear that their subordinates are not satisfied or feel bored with what they are doing. It is certainly unacceptable in any workplace culture. Another reason is that the employees were very excited at the beginning and did not mind doing the tedious and easy tasks and just coped with it with time. Most importantly, employees naturally assume that it is

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always nice to have free time at work and still get paid. However, in the long run, making strategies to avoid getting caught is exhausting, and doing the same activities in that free time will also become boring [16].

Antecedents of Boreout (Factors that result in Boreout)

Boreout does not happen suddenly. It takes time for the three dimensions to grow in the individual. For example, it is not considered boredom, if employees stay a little more after lunchtime to catch up with each other. In addition, each job has small and repetitive tasks that can be done quickly. Having that does not mean that the job is under-challenging the employee. The same applies to disinteresting tasks because these things are part of every job. It starts to be an issue when these things happen daily. At this point, the individual begins realizing that something is wrong.

The figure below shows how boreout develops in employees. In the beginning, everything is in the ideal situation until things start to change. When they are given too many tasks, it leads to burnout. And, when they are given disinteresting and easy tasks, it leads to boreout. The middle line represents the ideal situation where an employee has a fair workload and enough break time. At this point, the work is stable, challenging, and enjoyable. On this line, everything is optimal until it starts dropping to point one. Then, the work becomes too easy when the employees are used to it. So, the more they repeat the tasks, the more they lose interest in the work [8].

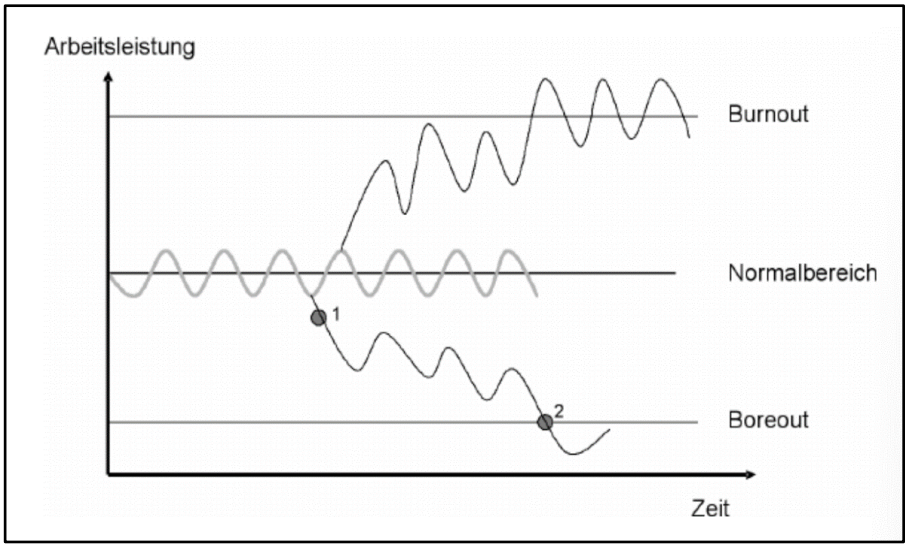

Figure 1, (Rothlin & Werder, 2007, 31).

Consequences of Boreout

[8] discovered that job dissatisfaction is one of the consequences of boreout.

Job dissatisfaction

It is defined as an irritating state of mind and emotions of employees towards a job, stopping them from obtaining the purpose of the job [17]. Employees' health and performance are highly linked to how much they are satisfied with their jobs. Moreover, job dissatisfaction also negatively affects employees' performance by increasing the absence rate because employees do not want to do their tasks which risks losing their jobs [18].

[8] also found that depression and anxiety are consequences of boreout.

Depression

It is a medical disorder characterized by exhaustion, melancholy devaluation of life and self-esteem, lack of interest or participation, anhedonia, and lethargy, among other symptoms. Depression was linked to decreased productivity, presenteeism, and absenteeism at work. Boreout has been linked to the unpleasant symptoms of depression [19].

Anxiety

Anxiety is a psychological reaction to difficult or perilous life conditions [20]. Autonomic arousal, skeletal musculature effects, phobias, a subjective feeling of anxious affect, and panic disorders are all signs of anxiety as a psychiatric condition. Therefore, there is a strong correlation between boreout and anxiety [21]. [22] also argued that boreout increases anxiety levels due to the lack of confidence and the loss of belief in their capabilities.

Lack of Innovation

Innovation work behavior is defined as how employees develop novel solutions to solve problems related to their work. Employees with boreout have no excitement whatsoever to be innovative [23]. [24] linked this behavior to the crisis of growth and crisis of meaning in work dimensions. She also stated that the third dimension (job boredom) makes it impossible for employees to be innovative at their work. The explanation for predicting a relationship between boreout and innovative behavior link is compatible with the conservation of resources theory [25]. The fundamental principle of the theory is that employees will experience stress if they face a loss of essential resources. Resources are not necessarily tangible. They could be presented as energy, conditions, and objects that help achieve organizational goals [4].

Decreased Customer-Oriented Behavior

Customer orientation is the service provider's readiness to adapt service delivery to a customer's condition like requests, difficulties, or exceptional circumstances [26]. The direct impacts are explained using the conservation of resources theory. The theory's core idea is that psychological pressure results from the loss or expected loss of valuable resources. Moreover, the idea of conservation of resources predicts that when organizations fail to offer these resources, employees become less productive [27].

Decreased Work Engagement

Work engagement, as demonstrated by enthusiasm, commitment, and concentration, is a driving factor that influences employees' performance, customer-oriented and innovative behavior [28]. Boreout may be viewed as an obstacle in accordance with the transactional theory of stress because it stops or delays the growth and learning process of the employees. They become unable to deliver their tasks appropriately, and therefore they lack work engagement. Boreout could be a real risk when it affects work engagement where employees directly interact with customers. It will be a barrier to them from reading their customers' needs [29].

Employee Performance

The concept of employee performance is defined by many researchers. In general terms, performance refers to worker productivity in reaching the expected value and fulfillment of

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assigned tasks under the process and time constraints of the company [30]. One of the most fundamental theoretical frameworks for conceptualizing job performance has three conditions: 1) staying in the organization, 2) consistently achieving or even surpassing the expected performance target provided by the organization, and 3) performing non-requested tasks randomly like, sharing ideas to improve the organization and helping other members in their tasks. The second and third patterns of behavior contrast organizationally necessary tasks with tasks that aren't always required by a job. Both of these behaviors are important. Some managers are willing to consider both prescribed and unscripted tasks when deciding how to evaluate the job performance equal to how much money it is worth.

Organizational spontaneity, organizational citizenship, and prosocial organizational behavior are closely linked to the patterns of required and unrequired organizational behaviors described. Although they are different in specific areas, they all show how people in the organization work together and help each other [31]. [32] think that things like job satisfaction, psychological state, and work pressure can significantly impact how people work together and help each other at work.

Another attempt was made by [33] to conceptualize job performance, which provided an alternative approach to structuring job performance. He designed a measure that structured job performance into task-specific and non-task-specific proficiency, textual and verbal communication, the amount of effort showed, preserving personal discipline, supporting teammates, and offering help and guidance. [33] approach elucidates a crucial difference between performance behaviors that benefit the organization through task proficiency and performance behaviors that benefit the organization in other ways

Accordingly, the three interconnected approaches pervade these efforts to characterize generically significant components of job performance. Firstly, the contrast between role behavior that is required and role behavior that is voluntary. Secondly, the collection of cooperative and helpful activities is characterized by an emotional component seen in prosocial behavior, organizational citizenship behavior, and organizational spontaneity. Thirdly, the contrast between task-specific and non-task-specific proficiency. All of these theories converge in [34] differentiation between task performance and contextual performance [35].

Task Performance (In-role Performance)

[36] defined task performance as the work behavior linked to the organization's technical core, either by implementing its technical processes, such as sales, inventory management, production, and supervising or by retaining and handling its technical needs. It is known as the primary in-role tasks that employees were employed to do to receive their salaries [37]. The concept of task performance represents the way to achieve organizational objectives. Each role/position/job within the organization has different tasks, and they all have a direct or indirect effect on the organization and the individual performance [38].

According to [39], task performance consists of two types: the first is the one that converts raw materials to the products or services of the organization. That includes activities like teaching in educational centers, collecting checks in banks, performing surgeries in hospitals, and operating machines in factories. The second involves operations that support and sustain the technical core by restocking raw material, delivering ready products, performing critical

planning, coordinating, supervising, and personnel duties that enable the technical core to operate successfully. Therefore, task performance is intrinsically linked to the organization's technical core, whether through the execution of its technical processes or the maintenance and fulfillment of its technical needs.

Factors Increasing Task Performance

- *Job Satisfaction and Task Performance:* According to [40], employees who are happy with their job will have high task performance. On the other hand, [36] argues that job satisfaction has no significant effect on task performance because in-role tasks has to be done anyway.
- *Payment and Promotions and Task Performance:* Payment and promotion are linked to how employees perform their tasks. Suppose employees feel that they are getting a fair amount of payment, they will do their tasks properly. Moreover, they will also show high performance when they know they could get a promotion by doing that [41].
- *Ethical Leadership and Task Performance:* Ethical leaders are leaders who make decisions with concern for the long-term success of the organization and its people. When ethical leaders supervise employees, their chances of being supported and noticed are higher. Following this, these supervisors will gain more respect and value in the eyes of their subordinates, which will develop a good relationship between them. Thence, the employees' task performance will be positively affected thanks to this relationship [42].
- *Respectful Engagement and Task Performance*: Respectful engagement refers to being there for the employees. Respectful engagement could be done by showing appreciation, recognition, and proper interaction with the employees and focusing on enhancing employees' strengths and improving their weaknesses. It has been proved that respect is directly linked to task performance and organizational citizenship behaviors, and it limits turnovers [43].
- *Transformational Leadership and Task Performance:* Transformational leadership is a collaborative process in which leaders and followers work together to raise the morale of employees. Transformative leaders inspire followers to put the organization ahead of personal interests. When followers connect their personal success to the success of their organizations and have the same goals and values as the organization, they become eager to contribute positively to the workplace, which will also result in increased task performance [44].
- *Servant Leadership and Task Performance:* According to [45], servant leadership is where leaders serve their employees while also listening and understanding them, creating harmony, and bringing insights. It has been shown that servant leadership indirectly affects task performance. As servant leaders give autonomy and self-sufficiency, leading their subordinates to perform at a higher level.
- *Organizational Justice Perception and Task Performance:* it means experiencing fairness in the workplace. According to [46], when employees feel that they are being unfairly treated and there is an imbalance between their effort and how they are reworded, they try to balance it by reducing their amount of work. However, when they experience justice in the workplace, their task performance level increases.
- *Organizational Identification and Task Performance:* Organizational identification is a notion that originated in social identity theory. Social identification refers to a person's sense of oneness. Consequently, Organizational Identification is a subset of social identity in which individuals identify as members of a certain organization and is

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defined as a sense of identification with or belonging to an organization [47]. [48] stated that employees with organizational identification would mostly show better task performance than employees who don't.

- *Organizational Commitment and Task Performance:* Individual commitment to an organization displays allegiance and dedication to that organization. When employees of an organization accept and embrace its values, they will be motivated to work hard to accomplish the company's goals and demonstrate more organizational commitment, resulting in high performance. [49].

There are some personality traits that could also increase employees' performance

- *Openness to New Experiences and Task Performance*: It is a personality trait that is expected to play a role in determining the growth of employees' performance across time [50]. It is expected to influence the performance path by affecting people's inner drive to learn [51].
- *Conscientiousness and Task Performance:* Conscientiousness is the degree to which an individual is goal-oriented, dependable, persistent, diligent, and purposeful. All these variables may influence both the effort an individual makes on a particular activity and the degree of performance achieved by that individual [52].
- *Agreeableness and Task Performance:* This personality trait is all about how people interact with one another. Agreeableness is a term that encompasses characteristics such as selflessness, cooperation, supportiveness, forgiveness, adaptability, kindness, compassion, and politeness [53]. According to [54], agreeableness is more effective in situations that require cooperative action and collaboration.
- *Emotional Stability and task performance:* Individuals must possess more than cognitive capabilities and innovative ideas; they must also exhibit specific personal characteristics such as emotional stability. Having emotional stability makes employees capable of allocating their energy and resources towards their tasks and have a high task performance [55].
- *Internal Locus Control and Task Performance:* Internal locus of control is the conviction that an individual's actions have consequences [56]. Employees with an internal locus of control perceive many outcomes as being contingent on the effort put into pursuing them. Therefore, such individuals may believe that outcomes are mainly dependent on their effort, making them more likely to push themselves when dealing with their tasks [57].
- *Type A Personality and task performance:* Individuals with type A personalities strive for achievement that has a positive effect on increasing task performance [58]. [59] suggest that type A personality has three characteristics that make them perform better in their tasks 1) being goal-oriented, 2) invasive and insistent, and 3) quickened and committed to deadlines.

Factors Decreasing Task Performance

- *Employee Burnout and Task Performance:* As known, burnout has a massive negative effect on employees. That includes absenteeism, turnover, and low task performance [60].
- *Role Ambiguity and Task Performance:* According to [61], role ambiguity can impair individuals' capacity to achieve personal and professional objectives at work and reduce morale which could decrease the level of job satisfaction [62]. [63] also stated in their

study that if employees feel their roles and tasks are ae ambiguous, it will negatively affect their task performance.

- *Rudeness and Task Performance:* Victims of rudeness at the workplace have many reasons to face declining in their task performance. Revenge is the most common reason as the victim sees that the offender has passed the ethical boundaries, and it is needed to take a reaction to restore justice, not allowing it to happen again, and to regain harmed identity. To achieve that, they could intentionally misuse their resources to finish specific tasks or make a minimal effort and demonstrate a lack of dedication. [64].
- *Task Difficulty and Task Performance:* Numerous mediators exist between task difficulty and performance. Task difficulty has been demonstrated to directly affect motivation, success expectations, stress/anxiety, and physiological components, all of which directly affect performance. [65]. Furthermore, [66] discovered that individuals who viewed a task as more complicated than those completing the same task had lower self-perceptions of capability, lower levels of motivation and interest, and performed less overall than their colleagues.
- *Workplace Incivility and Task Performance:* [67] observed that the more that employees experience incivility, the more they become vulnerable to stress, anxiety, and depression. [68] stated that mistreated employees might get their revenge on their employers covertly by slowing down their pace at work or even secretly harming the abuser. As a result, employees' task performance will be negatively affected as they focus on other things than completing their tasks.
- *Toxic Leadership and Task Performance:* Toxic leadership is a collection of selfish attitudes, motives, and actions that can negatively influence task performance. It is understood that a certain level of stress is a natural component of life, but if it exceeds that level, it starts to affect individuals' mental health and could reach to affecting physical health as well [69].
- *Destructive Leadership and Task Performance:* [70] defined and explained it as a broad concept encompassing various volitional leader activities that push followers to act against their organizations' interests. Long-term and repeated exposure to destructive behavior by someone in authority is likely to induce stress and decrease satisfaction, reducing employees' task performance.
- *Perception of Organizational Politics and Task Performance:* [71] found that the perception of organizational politics has a negative impact on employee task performance. They observed that in highly politicized organizations, awards are not always linked to performance but may also be influenced by relations, authority, as well as other non-objective considerations. Thus, strong political views are likely associated with low performance, as individuals are not rewarded based on their efforts.

<u>There are some personality traits that could also decrease employees' performance</u>

- *Neuroticism and Task Performance:* Neuroticism is identified by significantly associated factors of impatience, irritation, depression, anxiety, animosity, self-consciousness, and insecurity [72]. According to [73], a certain level of neuroticism could positively affect performance. For example, employees will ditch activities unrelated to their tasks and only focus on finishing them. However, a high level of neuroticism could harm employees' task performance because, in this case, they will ditch the activities that are related to their tasks.

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- *External Locus of Control and Task Performance:* Locus of control is collected interactions in which individuals see the cause of sequences that occur in their lives [56]. External locus of control is the type that negatively affects employee performance. It is referred to individuals who believe that they have no control over being rewarded and that their actions are not related to the outcomes. Employees with an external locus of control are exposed to stress as they see some situations at work as stressful more than their colleagues resulting in a reduction in their task performance [74].
- *Type B Personality and Task Performance:* individuals with type B personalities are not as competitive as type A personalities, do not feel time pressure, rarely feel stressed, lack impatience, rarely feel guilty, and do not care about finishing their tasks flawlessly or on time [75]. Having these characteristics makes the employees care less about achieving their tasks and do not feel the risk of failing, which reduces task performance [59].

Contextual Performance (Extra-role Performance)

According to [37], contextual performance refers to actions that affect the environment and culture of the organization where maintenance and transformation functions are done. Contextual performance behaviors include providing additional work, continuing to give in high energy, assisting and working with others, obeying the organizational rules, and standing out for the organization. Another study defines it as doing work that is not written in an employee's job description. It is also referred to as extra-role performance. It creates a healthy environment with good interpersonal and psychological conditions in the organization that represents the mission and vision of the organization and helps in reaching its goals [76].

Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The term, organizational citizenship behavior, refers to voluntary activities within an organization. It is defined as a collection of beneficial, discretionary, and extra-role behaviors demonstrated by employees without expecting either performance appraisal or rewards. But these behaviors affect the organizations' functions positively. Moreover, these behaviors are not enforceable under the employment contract. Organizational citizenship behavior is a personal matter, and not delivering these behaviors does not result in penalties for the employees [77].

Five dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviors were determined by [78]: altruism, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, courtesy, and civic virtue.

- *Altruism:* Altruism is defined as a member assisting other organization members with their tasks [79]. According to [44], altruism is highly associated with performance measures, and it affects it positively.
- *Sportsmanship:* This dimension represents the employees' character, who are prepared to put up with predicted uncomfortable circumstances to obtain work without complaining [80].
- *Conscientiousness:* It refers to the personal behavior of an employee that is not intended towards another employee but serves the whole organization [80].
- *Courtesy:* It refers to actions that assist others in avoiding interpersonal conflicts, such as providing advance notice of a deadline to coworkers and discussing matters with others before making any decisions that will harm them [79].
- *Civic virtue:* It implies sharing thoughts on critical organizational problems and adding to the organization's culture and vitality [80].

Relationship between Boreout and Performance

It is unrealistic to expect employees to fulfill their tasks optimally if they do not have an interest in them and find no meaning in performing them. The individuals' job takes a considerable part of their lives. A person spends at least eight hours daily at work. For some positions, it goes beyond that, either by working for twelve hours shifts or that they must take phone calls after working hours from their bosses or even their clients depending on their jobs and positions' needs. So, realizing that they are dedicating all this time and effort to something they do not feel connected with is considered a waste of time. It becomes even worse when the feeling extends to realizing that what they are doing is not meaningful for the organization itself. This will only lead to unpleasant outcomes, as [81] found that having a sense of connection at work is vital for positive results for both sides, the employee and the employer. Based on this reasoning, I hypothesize the following:

H1: Crisis of meaning has a negative relationship with task performance

If employees must do the same tasks repetitively, two things could occur. First, they finish these tasks quickly, have nothing left to do for the rest of the work hours, and do not know what to do. Second, they are too bored with these tasks, so they stall them by doing other things unrelated to their job. In both cases, the task performance is negatively affected. [82] reached the same reasoning as he stated that boredom results in a lack of excitement that stops in the way of getting new creative ideas. In the second case, the performance will be negatively affected because employees have their focus on other stuff, like taking more breaks than they should and finishing their personal matters during that time. For that reason, I hypothesize the following:

H2: Job boredom has a negative relationship with task performance

It is hard to expect a high task performance from employees that suffer from a crisis of meaning. If an employee knows that continuously doing the same tasks over and over will not add new knowledge or experience, they will not be able to put a good performance to finish their tasks. Moreover, if they see that this job is not an excellent opportunity to grow, they will have no excitement or motives to perform well. [83] reached the same reasoning as they stated that individuals with a crisis of growth experience a reduction in knowledge, which impacts their task performance. Moreover, if employees are promised career growth, they will show the organization they work for high task performance and contextual performance as a way of appreciation [84]. For that reason, I hypothesize the following:

H3: Crisis of growth has a negative relationship with task performance

Procrastination

The term procrastination is taken from a Latin verb (procrastinare) that means delaying finishing things to another day, and it is divided into two words, "pro" which means forward, and "crastinus" which means "tomorrow" [6]. Therefore, it is defined as the unnecessary postponing of tasks. People have been facing this phenomenon for ages, but especially in the last four decades, researchers have turned their focus on it more than ever [85]. However, procrastination is not like any other delay, and it is different in two main points. The first is that it is a voluntary act of delaying tasks as individuals are intentionally delaying them, not being forced to due to a computer crash. The other point is that individuals are aware that delaying these tasks could come with a cost like reducing the outcome quality [6].

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[86] explained in their book "Procrastination. Why You Do It, What to Do About It Now" that procrastination does not happen overnight. It has different kinds of reasons that build up with time and causes this phenomenon in an individual. They likened procrastination to a dandelion that has many roots, emotional, related to time, biological, and interpersonal. They believe that accepting and knowing these roots helps figure out the right way to overcome procrastination. These explanations can be comprehended in a way to address a likely mediating role of procrastination in the relationship between boreout and performance. It is explained in the following section.

Mediating Role of Procrastination

It is difficult to find no meaning in what a person is doing, this also applies to a person's job. It could feel like walking toward a non-specific goal, which will make getting up in the morning and getting ready for work feel like punishment. When people are employed, it means spending the majority of their time at their jobs, so in the long run, it will feel like their whole life has no meaning at all. As a result, employees could start doing things that are not related to their jobs and mean more to them during working hours to not waste their whole time on something that is not meaningful for them which will lead them to procrastinate their main tasks at work because they cannot motivate themselves to achieve them. As mentioned in [7] study, employees could lose all their energy, enthusiasm, and excitement, if they did not find meaning in their work, forcing them to procrastinate their tasks by finding other exciting things to do, like gossiping. However, these employees know that it is essential to complete their tasks. Still, they cannot motivate themselves to do them because they find them unpleasant, so they resort to procrastination [87]. Therefore, the escaping strategies explained earlier prove that a crisis of meaning is linked with procrastination since a crisis of meaning is one of the boreout dimensions. As a result of this reasoning, I hypnotize the following:

H4: Crisis of meaning has a positive relationship with procrastination

Doing the same thing repetitively every single day at work without facing challenges and competition could be really boring for some people. The work environment can feel too slow and too easy with time, especially for talented and sharp employees which will lead them to find other interesting activities resulting in neglecting their main tasks and leaving them for the last minute to complete. [88] said that employees with repetitive and easy tasks tend to procrastinate. [89] agreed with this and stated that if employees are bored with the tasks and think they do not need much effort to finish on time, they will procrastinate and still be able to deliver them later with no trouble. Hence, I hypothesize that:

H5: Job boredom has a positive relationship with procrastination

If an employee is not growing on a personal and professional level, how will they be motivated to work? Being involved in challenges and decision-making makes people grow not only at their jobs but also enhances their self-confidence and improve their personalities as they feel more important and believe what they are doing is important as well. If they do not get this feeling from the job they are dedicating their time and effort to, they will feel that it is only a waste of their effort and start working with minimum effort, that could be in coming late to work, leaving early and, delaying completing their tasks. [86] stated in their book that when people are under-challenged, they resort to procrastination. When they reach this level, they should start looking for a new challenge. After this reasoning, I hypothesize the following:

H6: Crisis of growth has a positive relationship with procrastination

[90] concluded that employees procrastinate after being affected by two factors. The first one is employees procrastinate because of their individual characteristics, and the second one is they procrastinate because of their job characteristics. The first one is caused by three reasons: 1) The employee is indecisive and afraid to decide without a manager/supervisor's confirmation. 2) The employees enjoy the excitement of finishing the task at the last minute, so they procrastinate it. 3) The employee has a weak personality and an avoidant attitude and seeks to put off tasks. The second factor is also caused by three reasons: 1) being pressured with the given time to finish the task, so employees try to finish their tasks on time without focusing on the outcome quality, or they avoid doing it and focus on other less important tasks. 2) The tasks are too difficult to achieve or do not make sense to the employee. 3) They are not comfortable in the environment, for example, the air condition situation (too hot or too cold) or even the lightning is too dark or too bright, so they develop procrastination behavior. Accordingly, all three reasons can negatively affect the performance of the tasks. Hence, I hypothesize that:

H7: Procrastination has a negative relationship with task performance

From these explanations, we can infer a mediating role of procrastination in the relationship between boreout and task performance because it is clear that boreout results in procrastination, and it in turn decreases task performance. That explains how the relationship between boreout and performance occurs through procrastination. Hence, I hypothesize that:

H8: Procrastination mediates the relationship between a crisis of meaning and task performance

H9: Procrastination mediates the relationship between job boredom and task performance

H10: Procrastination mediates the relationship between a crisis of growth and task performance

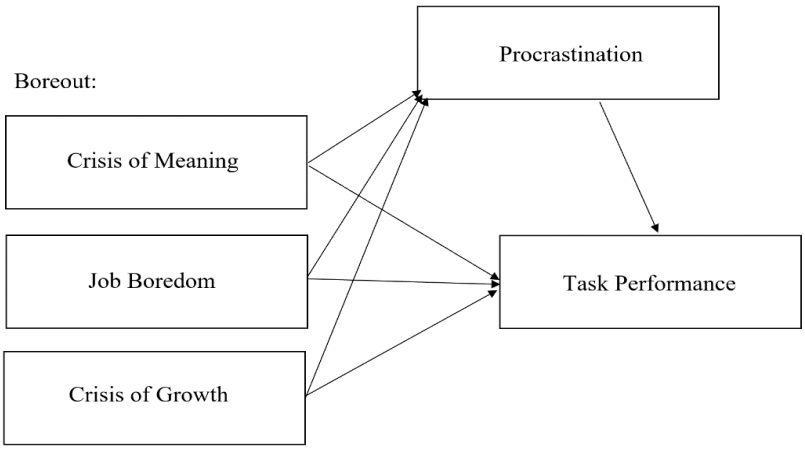

Figure 2. Conceptual Model

Methodology and Data collection instruments

The sample comprises 400 employees who work in a telecommunication company operating in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. Although it is a multinational company that operates in 16 countries, the participants were all in the United Arab Emirates. The sample was determined

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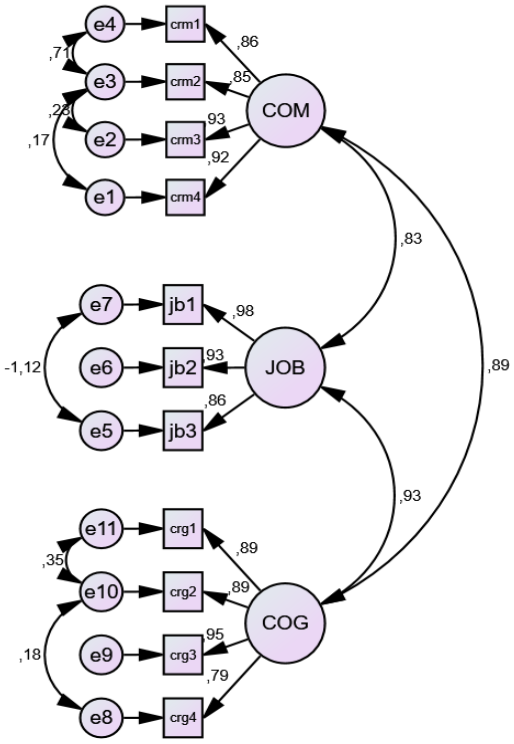
according to the convenience sampling technique. Of participants 296 (74%) are male and 104 (26%) are female, 6 (1.5%) have a high school degree, 368 (92%) have a bachelor's degree, 22 (5.5%) have a master's degree and 4 (1%) have a doctoral degree, 200 (50%) are married and 200 (50%) are single. The participants' ages vary between 24 and 50 years (*M*= 33.44, *SD*= 4.53). The demographics are calculated to have an opinion about the characteristics of the sample.

In this research, the data were collected through a questionnaire survey technique. On the questionnaire form, there were three sections. In the first section, instructions about the aim and scope of the research have been provided. In the second section, items of each variable (i.e., boreout, task performance, and procrastination) were listed respectively. In the third section, questions about the demographics (i.e., age, gender, marital status, and educational level) of participants were listed.

Boreout Scale

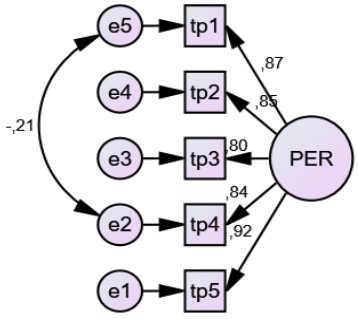
To measure boreout of participants a scale developed by [23] has been used. There are 11 items on the scale, each item has been measured over 7 points (1: strongly disagree, 7: strongly agree). There are 3 dimensions in this scale, such as the crisis of meaning, job boredom, and the crisis of growth. The number of items for each scale was 4, 3, and 4 respectively. To test the validity of the scale a confirmatory factor analysis has been performed. The analysis output is presented in Figure 3. Results indicated that fit indices (X2=113.14, p=0.00, x2/d.f= 3.23, RMSEA=0.07, CFI=0.98, GFI=0.95, IFI=0.98) were between acceptable margins. That is why, it is possible to say that in this research, boreout scale has an acceptable level of construct validity. To test the reliability of the scale, Cronbach α coefficient for each dimension and for the overall scale has been calculated. The Cronbach α value for the crisis of meaning, job boredom, and crisis of growth dimensions and for the overall boreout scale were 0.95, 0.93, 0.93, and 0.97 respectively. These results indicated that boreout scale had an acceptable level of reliability in this research.



COM: Crisis of Meaning, JOB: Job Boredom, COG: Crisis of Growth
Figure 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Boreout Scale

Performance Scale

To measure the task performance of participants a scale developed by [91] has been used. There are 5 items on the scale, each item has been measured over 7 points (1: strongly disagree, 7: strongly agree). This is a unidimensional scale comprising. To test the validity of the scale a confirmatory factor analysis has been performed. The analysis output is presented in Figure 4. Results indicated that fit indices (X^2= 9.47, p=0.05, X^2/d.f= 2.36, RMSEA=0.05, CFI=0.99, GFI=0.99, IFI=0.99) were between acceptable margins. That is why, it is possible to say that in this research, performance scale has an acceptable level of construct validity. To test the reliability of the scale, Cronbach α coefficient for the scale has been calculated. The Cronbach α value for the task performance scale was 0.92, indicating an acceptable level of reliability in this research.



PER: Task Performance
Figure 4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Task Performance Scale

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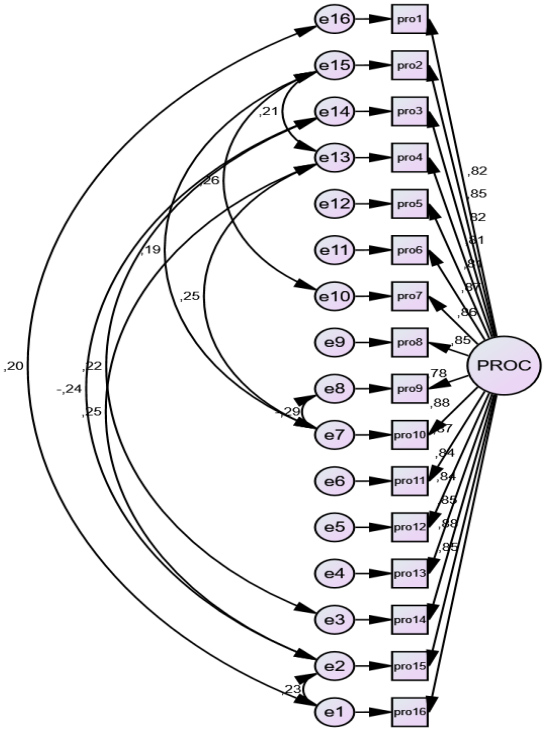
Procrastination Scale

To measure the procrastination of participants a scale developed by [92] has been used. There are 16 items on the scale, each item has been measured over 7 points (1: strongly disagree, 7: strongly agree). This is a unidimensional scale. To test the validity of the scale a confirmatory factor analysis has been performed. The analysis output is presented in Figure 5. Results indicated that fit indices (X^2= 328.17, p=0.00, X^2/d.f= 3.49, RMSEA=0.07, CFI=0.96, GFI=0.90, IFI=0.96) were between acceptable margins. That is why, it is possible to say that in this research, the procrastination scale has an acceptable level of construct validity. To test the reliability of the scale, Cronbach α coefficient has been calculated. The Cronbach α value for the procrastination scale was 0.97. This result indicated that the procrastination scale had an acceptable level of reliability in this research.



PROC: Procrastination

Figure 5. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Procrastination Scale

FINDINGS

To provide the basis for the hypothesis test, first, correlation coefficients were calculated. Correlation coefficients between variables and means and standard deviations of variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1. Crisis of meaning	4.68	1.81	1				
2. Job boredom	5.05	1.82	0.77**	1			
3. Crisis of growth	5.01	1.87	0.83**	0.87**	1		
4. Task performance	3.95	1.68	-0.76**	-0.74**	-0,75**	1	
5. Procrastination	4.47	1.67	0.80**	0.83**	0.81**	-0,88**	1

***p*<.01**

Findings indicated that there is a negative relationship between the crisis of meaning and task performance (*r*= -0.76, *p*<.01) and a positive relationship between the crisis of meaning and procrastination (*r*= 0.80, *p*<.01). There is also a negative relationship between job boredom and task performance (*r*= -0.74, *p*<.01) and a positive relationship between job boredom and procrastination (*r*= 0.83, *p*<.01). Finally, there is a negative relationship between the crisis of growth and task performance (*r*= -0.75, *p*<.01) and a positive relationship between the crisis of growth and procrastination (*r*= 0.81, *p*<.01). Correlation coefficients provide support to perform regression tests. Because correlation results can misguide the interpretation of findings due to the fact that they could be coincidental, the regression tests were performed to find out whether these relationships were stable and reliable.

In this respect, to test the hypotheses, linear regression tests have been performed using SPSS. Findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Hypothesis test results

Independent Variables		**Dependent Variables**		***F***	**R^2**
		Performance (*β*)	**Procrastination (*β*)**		
Model 1	Crisis of meaning	-0.41***		243.72***	0.64
	Job boredom	-0.28***			
	Crisis of growth	-0.16*			
Model 2	Crisis of meaning		0.32***	409.65***	0.75
	Job boredom		0.43***		
	Crisis of growth		0.16**		
Model 3	Crisis of meaning	-0.15***		391.85***	0.79
	Job boredom	0.05			
	Crisis of growth	-0.02			
	Procrastination	-0.78***			

***p*<.05, ****p*<.01, *****p*<.001**

Analyses were performed within three models. In the first model, the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable were investigated. In the second model, the relationships between the independent variables and the mediator variable were investigated.

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And, in the third model, the mediator variable entered into the analysis together with the independent variables to find out whether it mediated the relations between them.

Findings indicated that there were negative relationships between the crisis of meaning and task performance (β= -0.41, p<.001), job boredom and task performance (β= -0.28, p<.001), and the crisis of growth and task performance (β= -0.16, p<.05). Therefore, hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 are supported.

It is also clear from the findings that there were positive relationships between the crisis of meaning and procrastination (β= 0.32, p<.001), job boredom and procrastination (β= 0.43, p<.001), and the crisis of growth and procrastination (β= 0.16, p<.01). Therefore, hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 were supported too.

As for the mediation, results of the model 3 revealed a negative relationship between procrastination and performance (β= -0.78, p<.001) together with a negative relationship between the crisis of meaning and performance (β= -0.15, p<.001) while there were no significant relationships between job boredom and performance (β= 0.05, p>.05) and the crisis of growth and performance (β= -0.02, p>.05). This is an indication of a full mediation role of procrastination in the relationship between job boredom and performance and the crisis of growth and performance and an indication of a partial mediation role of procrastination in the relationship between the crisis of meaning and performance. Hence, hypotheses 7, 8, 9, and 10 were supported as well.

DISCUSSION

The research questions listed in the introduction section created the foundation of the research. By asking these questions, I wanted to discover three things 1) whether employee performance is affected by employee boreout 2) whether there is a relationship between procrastination and employee boreout 3) whether employee performance is affected by procrastination. I hypothesized that all boreout dimensions have a negative effect on task performance. In addition, I hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between all boreout dimensions and procrastination. Moreover, I hypothesized that the relationship between procrastination and task performance is negative. Lastly, all of that made me hypothesize that procrastination mediates the relationship between boreout and task performance.

After the analysis, it appeared that there are significant relationships between the research variables. As was hypothesized, there was a negative relationship between the crisis of meaning and task performance, a negative relationship between job boredom and task performance as well as a negative relationship between the crisis of growth and task performance. These findings support similar studies that have been done on the matter [23], [29], and [90]. In addition, other significant relationships were found. There was a positive relationship between the crisis of meaning and procrastination, a positive relationship between job boredom and procrastination, and a positive relationship between the crisis of growth and procrastination, improving and supporting previous studies of [7], [87], [88], [89], [86], and [93]. Furthermore, the result for the mediating variable that helped in forming the research model also came as hypothesized. This means that procrastination has a full mediation role in the relationship between job boredom and performance and between the crisis of growth and performance and a partial mediation role of procrastination in the relationship between the crisis of meaning and

performance. To the best of my knowledge, there has not been any previous empirical study that has been conducted on the effect of employee boreout on task performance with the mediating role of procrastination. Therefore, these results fill a gap and contribute to the field of organizational behavior

These findings can be helpful for numerous organizations, and they will especially help managers or supervisors that have a huge number of employees. That could contain call centers, front desk employees, customer service employees, factory workers, inventory workers, and many others because it shows how performance is affected by boreout. Based on the findings, boreout has a negative effect on task performance with the mediating role of procrastination. For that, I encourage people with authority in organizations the following: 1) explain the importance of every task for the employees and show them how much it means for the productivity of the organization. 2) Focus on motivation, by giving tangible or intangible rewards, rotating employees' positions, so they will not be repeating their tasks for a long time, splitting employees into teams, and setting a target for each team with a reward for the winning team. Use many other technics that will reduce boredom. 3) Show appreciation through promotion, salary improvement, or empowerment, whatever is needed to show promising employees that they have a future in the organization and that good work is seen and appreciated. When employees feel the importance of each task they have, they are valuable, and they have a chance to grow, which will reduce the number of boreout employees so their performance will not be affected negatively, and the overall performance of the organization will not be affected for this reason.

Although this research contributes to the literature, I faced some limitations in conducting it. I was only allowed to collect data from participants through a survey. I believe that collecting data through interviews would have made the participants describe their feeling clearly and we would have collected extra information like how the feeling of boreout developed in them. Moreover, as has been mentioned before, the company I conducted the survey in is a multinational company, it operates in different countries and my sample was taken only from one country – the United Arab Emirates – If I collected data from employees in another 2 or 3 countries, I could have had a more general sample. But the lack of access and time made me study a sample from one country.

This study unfolds space for more research to be done on the matter, as future research can collect data not with surveys only, but also through interviews to get more comprehensive answers about their feelings. In addition, future research can conduct the same study but in different locations to be able to compare the results. Moreover, the mediating role of procrastination can be studied with other variables. For example, the effect of task difficulty on employee performance mediating the role of procrastination.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this research was to discover the effect of employees' boreout on their performance with the mediating role of procrastination. It was discovered that employee boreout has a negative effect on employee performance, while there was a positive relationship between boreout and procrastination, and a negative relationship between procrastination and performance. Meaning that employees who suffer from boreout tend to procrastinate their tasks which will affect their performance negatively.

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This research is different from any other research because, to the best of my knowledge, it investigated the mediating role of procrastination with the effect of employee boreout on performance for the first time. This study filled a gap in the literature by adding its findings to the field of organizational behavior and contributed to practice. The theoretical implications of this study will guide and open new avenues for the coming studies. It also spotted the light on boreout syndrome which is rarely discussed in the Middle East. Hence, this study can play a significant role in encouraging more studies to be done on that matter, especially in the Middle East region. In this context, as addressed earlier, people with authority in organizations should focus on knowing how their employees feel about their jobs, and understand what is missing. The employee's jobs should mean something to them and their tasks should make sense. They must have motivation and excitement to complete their tasks and see room for their growth.

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