



## EMPLOYEE BURNOUT DUE TO 'JAPA' SYNDROME; ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY, AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AND TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG NIGERIAN PHARMACEUTICAL WORKERS

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**ABSTRACT:** *The research study focused is to determining the effect of employee burnout on employee creativity, affective commitment and turnover intention in the pharmaceutical industry in Nigeria. With the growing global trend and ease of migration 'Japa', the level of employee burnout has been on an increase as an aftermath of delivering on the performance demands. The study focused on Maslach Inventory Model which categorised employee burnout into emotional exhaustion, Depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from various pharmaceutical workers in the city of Lagos, Nigeria. A total of one hundred and eighty-four employees were sampled using the convenience sampling technique. The collated data were analysed using regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The findings reveal that; there is a significant relationship between employee burnout and employee creativity, there is a significant relationship between employee burnout and affective commitment, and there is a significant influence of employee burnout on turnover intention. The study, however, recommends that to strengthen the organization's burnout-reduction system, the organisation need to encourage various strategic business or functional units to design burnout-reduction programs and initiatives that they believe would be beneficial in their units. In relation to how employee burnout is addressed, the business may also devise a method to award the best unit in terms of creativity, innovation, commitment, and productivity.*

**KEYWORDS:** Employee burnout, employee creativity, affective commitment, turnover intention, Maslach Inventory Model, and Japa Syndrome.



## INTRODUCTION

Not just industrialised economies, but developing nations are increasingly devoting greater consideration to the trend of decline in all sectors owing to burnout. Organisations must constantly balance the benefits and drawbacks of change as globalisation continues to cast doubt on the viability of current organisational strategies, practices, and structures (Okundalaiye & Odujoko, 2022). There is substantial potential cost generated by burnout for managers and staff (Emerson et al., 2023). Burnout is associated with poor workplace outcomes like increased absenteeism, dropped job efficiency, higher yield intention, decreased service top quality, and less employee satisfaction (Dall'Ora et al., 2020). In addition to increasing health concerns for people, burnout may cause anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and drug cravings. For all workers, the quality of life at work is crucial (Uche et al., 2020). Burnout is often seen as infectious on the job and detrimental to people's personal lives (Demirci et al., 2010).

Burnout happens when there is a significant dissonance between the nature of the person doing the task and the nature of the task (Chung et al., 2021). Hence, burnout is not a personal issue but rather a social/environmental problem connected to the employment of a person (Chung et al., 2021). Job burnout considers an unpleasant and stressful situation which influences both employees and the organisation's commitment levels (Kouhihabibi, 2021). Burnout may increase absenteeism, turnover intent and turnover, and work withdrawal and affect performance (Emerson et al., 2023).

There are various misconceptions about burnout. The public may place the responsibility for burnout on certain workers rather than the workplace itself (Moss, 2019). Burnout might be blamed on inept employees, while some feel that overwork or exhaustion is to blame. These claims, however, are not supported by research, which shows that burnout is a result of environmental and situational circumstances rather than the individual (Maslach, 2018). In recent years, academic research has begun to focus on the extent of burnout experienced by professionals in the service industry. Organisations currently operate in a dynamic environment that makes it challenging to anticipate changes (Akinola & Okundalaiye, 2022). According to Patel et al (2018), burnout may lead to diminished productivity, less commitment to the job, absenteeism, weariness and poorer production. Workplace issues and expectations about job progress contribute a great deal to burnout among employees.

The health sector in Nigeria has been majorly impacted by globalisation and ease of international mobility, that is, the 'Japa' syndrome. According to Ogungbile (2023), the Yoruba phrase "Japa," which signifies moving on to better pastures, is still perpetually running errands in the disgruntled minds of Nigerian youths. This growing desire among citizens across various age brackets to leave Nigeria is also a trend in most African countries (Ogungbile, 2023). The current net migration rate in Nigeria is -0.273 per 1000 population, meaning that more individuals are leaving the nation. Nigeria is currently sinking deep into a brain drain, and it is putting a lot of workloads on the workers left or yet to Japa. Employees' well-being suffers as a result of these shifts and the resulting increase in performance demands. These employees experience a high level of stress in their personal and professional relationships, as well as distrust among coworkers (Xu et al., 2020). Burnout in the healthcare sector, especially in the pharmaceutical area, is expensive and detrimental to employee, their employers, customers, their family, the workforce and even to society (Painter, 2021).



## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Maslach Inventory Model

The Maslach Inventory Model is a widely-used tool for assessing employee burnout in the workplace. It is composed of three subscales: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1996). It was developed by Christina Maslach and Susan Jackson in the 1980s and has become widely used in research and organisational settings (Maslach et al., 1996). The model measures the intensity of burnout symptoms and has been used to assess employee burnout in a variety of industries. Employees who are emotionally exhausted and feeling depersonalised may struggle to come up with new ideas or think outside the box (Dodanwala & Shrestha, 2021). They may also be less likely to take risks, as they may feel that they do not have the energy or emotional resources to deal with potential failure. This makes employees feel disconnected from their work and their colleagues (Dodanwala & Shrestha, 2021). This can lead to a lack of engagement and a reduced sense of loyalty to the organisation (De Clercq et al., 2020).

The model is relatively easy to administer and interpret, making it a practical tool for managers and researchers alike. It is an effective measure of burnout, as it has been tested and validated in numerous research studies (Bui et al., 2022; Slabšinskienė et al., 2020; Gómez García et al., 2019). Also, it is a comprehensive measure that can be used to assess all three components of burnout (Slabšinskienė et al., 2020). However, it is a self-report measure, meaning that it relies on the individual's assessment of their feelings and experiences. More so, there is a lack of research on the use of the model in the pharmaceutical industry in Nigeria, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions. The application of the model in the industry promotes a comprehensive understanding of the associated risks and potential solutions to employee burnout (Heyns et al., 2022).

### Employee Burnout

There is no universally accepted definition of burnout in the literature, despite its widespread prevalence. Burnout is a clinical syndrome that is prevalent in many occupations and is characterised by high levels of stress, a loss of satisfaction, and a sense of being overworked (Gómez García et al., 2021). Burnout has a detrimental effect on an individual's performance and lowers work efficiency (Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout has become a serious issue in contemporary workplaces during the last ten years and has the potential to have negative consequences on a number of different economic sectors (Patel et al., 2018). Burnout typically results from a combination of job demands, such as work overload, long hours, role conflicts, unfairness, and value conflicts, and job resources, such as a lack of social support from coworkers or management, a lack of feedback, and a lack of active participation in decision-making (Crawford et al., 2010). It is expensive for employees and their institutions and seems to be more prevalent in developing nations than in wealthy ones (Painter, 2021).

Employee burnout can have both positive and negative effects on organisations. On the positive side, it can be a sign that employees are working hard and taking their jobs seriously (Soelton et al., 2020). On the other hand, it can lead to decreased morale, productivity, and engagement, all of which can be detrimental to an organisation's success (Soelton et al., 2020). Burnout syndrome may influence the physical and mental health of the employee and affects the quality of health care as well (Demirci et al., 2010). Emotional burnout is negatively associated with



life satisfaction and support for treatment, and promotes absenteeism and turnover intent (Karatepe et al., 2021). The early recognition of burnout as a serious health issue and prompt intervention in response to the issue is important in an organisation (Kesarwani et al., 2020). Reducing working hours, scheduling staff meetings, promoting collaboration and conversation among experts, holding seminars to enhance coping mechanisms, etc. are some preventative measures that may be used to avoid burnout (Kesarwani et al., 2020). Those who work with others in any form may experience burnout, which is characterised by emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and a lack of personal success (Kouhhabibi, 2021).

- **Emotional exhaustion**

Emotional exhaustion is characterised by a loss of energy and a feeling of being emotionally exhausted (Sarisik et al., 2019). It is a pervasive feeling of being completely drained of the emotional resources needed to continue working (Sarisik et al., 2019). This is the most common symptom of burnout, as well as the most well-documented and researched. This type of exhaustion involves feeling overwhelmed, overextended, and unable to cope with the demands of the job (Maslach, 2018). It may include feelings of fatigue, apathy, hopelessness, and irritability. People who suffer from this type of burnout often feel like they are on the verge of a breakdown.

- **Depersonalisation**

Depersonalisation is a state of detachment from work and coworkers (De Clercq et al., 2020). It involves a lack of caring, a decrease in empathy, and a lack of motivation (De Clercq et al., 2020). People who suffer from depersonalisation often feel uninterested and disconnected from their job and the people around them. It is possible to be depersonalized if one's actions and attitudes toward other people and organizations are negative, cruel, and cynical (Bocheliuk et al., 2020). They may become cynical and uncaring and may be less likely to put in the effort needed to perform well. Negative sentiments toward others, a lack of regard for others, or a tendency to respond to all parts of the task are all symptoms of depersonalisation (Bocheliuk et al., 2020).

- **Personal Accomplishment**

This is a state of feeling unfulfilled and lacking in achievement (Corbin et al., 2019). People who suffer from this type of burnout often feel like they have not been able to accomplish anything at work, and may become discouraged and unmotivated (Corbin et al., 2019). This type of burnout can lead to a decrease in self-efficacy and a feeling of failure (Bui et al., 2022). People who suffer from reduced personal accomplishment may also become overwhelmed and apathetic, leading to further burnout. Employees often have a pessimistic view of their abilities and their abilities, leading to low morale and a lack of motivation in the workplace (She et al., 2019).

## **Employee Creativity**

Creative workers, according to Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009), have a tendency to spot new product prospects or create new ways to use current techniques, provide fresh ideas to tackle work-related challenges, and also typically build suitable plans for execution. Organisational innovation relies on the creative output of its people (Laschinger & Fida, 2014). In addition to being more likely to come up with innovative solutions and advocate their ideas to others,



creative people are more likely to build sufficient implementation plans. When people are confident in the value of the work they do, their creativity rises (Cai et al., 2003). According to Cai et al (2003), creative workers provide unique and helpful ideas regarding organisational goods and processes and may serve as role models for the rest of the company.

Burnout, on the other hand, causes workers to feel depersonalised and lacking in personal achievement, which has a negative impact on their ability to come up with creative ideas (Laschinger & Fida, 2014). Choi (2007) found that employees with a high degree of organisational commitment were more creative. Zhou and Gorge (2001) found that employees with high job satisfaction demonstrated the most creativity when their commitment was strong, but this impact was reduced by colleagues' feedback and support, indicating the need to further investigate the role of organizational commitment on employee creativity in various organisational settings.

Hypothesis I:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between employee burnout on employee creativity

### **Affective Commitment**

According to Mowday (1984), one strategy to limit the negative effects of staff turnover is to have a high degree of commitment from your workers. Organisational commitment is a psychological condition maintained between an employee and a company (Siqueira & Gomide Jnior, 2004). As a sort of organisational commitment, affective commitment is characterised by a strong emotional response (Gill et al., 2011). The term "affective commitment" refers to an employee's emotional connection to the company they work for (Siqueira & Gomide Jnior, 2004). Acceptance of the change generates affective commitment, which in turn develops a commitment to the change (Akinola & Okundalaiye, 2022).

According to Akinola and Okundalaiye (2022), employees feel less orientated toward conventional and highly predictable roles, procedures, and environments as they become more committed to the company. Employees are less concerned about the difficulties that come with change as they become more emotionally bonded to the organisation. People who have a strong sense of commitment to their profession are better equipped to cope with the negative impacts of stress (Ngwama & Ogaga-Oghene, 2022). According to Enginyurt et al (2016), affective commitment is the primary determinant of burnout syndrome in healthcare professionals. More so, Garland et al (2014) asserted that affective commitment had a negative association with emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and feelings of reduced accomplishment.

Hypothesis II:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between employee burnout on affective commitment

### **Turnover Intention**

Turnover intention is a popular research topic in the field of organisational behaviour. Workers who are contemplating leaving their employment due to dissatisfaction with their current working conditions. Several businesses now consider staff retention to be an important success factor (Moussa, 2013). Long-term employees are tough for businesses to retain (Bagga, 2013). As a consequence of this high turnover rate, organisations suffer a huge financial burden





(Tshukudu, 2020). When it comes to the many sorts of job withdrawal, burnout has been connected to several of them. They include a desire to leave work, actual turnover, and absenteeism (Leiter & Maslach, 2009). Shimizu et al (2005) noted that people who have a history of burnout in a variety of roles are more inclined to contemplate quitting their present work. According to Jones et al (2010), in research centred on organisational psychology, burnout has a positive relationship with a person's desire to quit their work.

Hypothesis III:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between employee burnout on turnover intention

## METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was adopted for the study as it systematically obtains information to describe a situation, phenomenon, or population (Doyle et al., 2020). The study focused on pharmaceutical firms in Lagos state. Lagos state is the most commercial city in Nigeria and is home to a lot of pharmaceutical firms (multinational and local) such as Pfizer Nigeria Limited, GlaxoSmithKline Nigeria Limited, May & Baker Nigeria Plc, Fidson Healthcare Plc, Neimeth International Pharmaceuticals Plc and many more. Due to the easy accessibility of data, the convenience sampling technique was used to gather data from one hundred and eighty-four employees across these pharmaceutical firms.

The research instrument adopted in this study is a structured questionnaire which aligns with the features of survey research. This is because all questions are uniformly phrased and for ease of administration. The questions were adapted from known scholars based on the research variables of the study. For employee burnout, Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) scale by Maslach and Jackson (1981) which is about work-related attitudes and feelings assumed to characterize psychological burnout adapted for this study. The scale is divided into three (3) subscales which are emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and personal achievement, each subscale has 9 items, 5 items and 8 items respectively. Examples of items for each subscale are 'I feel used up at the end of the work day', 'I deal very effectively with the problems of my recipients', and 'I feel like I'm at the end of my rope' respectively. Each subscale is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (Never, A few times a year, A few times a month, A few times a month, every day). For Employee creativity, a 3-item scale was adapted from Oldham and Cummings (1996). It is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). An example of an item is 'This employee often comes up with adaptive and practical work that is useful to the organisation'. It has a Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value of 0.83. For Affective commitment, a 3-item scale was adapted from Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993). It is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). An example of an item is 'I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation'. It has a Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value of 0.83. For Turnover intention, a 3-item scale was adapted from Mobley et al (1979). It is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). An example of an item is 'I am actively searching for another job'. The collected data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22. Correlation and Regression analysis was used to show the relationship between each variable and also to test the hypotheses.



## RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1 contains descriptive statistics for the variables and correlations among employee burnout and its subscales, employee creativity, affective commitment, and turnover intention.

**Table 1. Means (M), standard deviations (SD), and correlations**

Variable	Item <i>N</i>	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EB	22	2.61	.57	1						
EH	9	2.73	.64	.900**	1					
DE	5	2.81	.62	.694**	.509**	1				
PA	8	2.35	.73	.891**	.677**	.458**	1			
EC	3	4.12	.74	-.117	-.177*	.124	-.143	1		
AC	3	3.40	.94	-.477**	-.528**	-.064	-.469**	.428**	1	
TI	3	3.21	1.11	.701**	.659**	.335**	.676**	-.047	-.708**	1

Notes: The Cronbach  $\alpha$  of each scale and subscale is listed in the diagonal in boldface type. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ . EB, Employee Burnout; EH, Emotional Exhaustion; DE, Depersonalisation; PA, Personal Achievement; EC, Employee Creativity; AC, Affective Commitment; TI, Turnover Intention.

The EB mean score was 2.61, which can be interpreted as minimal employee burnout. Among the subscales of employee burnout, the highest score came from Depersonalisation which was 2.81; Emotional exhaustion had a low mean score of 2.73, and reduced personal achievement also had a lower mean score of 2.35. The employee creativity mean score was 4.12, which can be interpreted as high employee creativity. The affective commitment and turnover intention mean scores were 3.40 and 3.21 respectively.

An examination of the correlations among employee burnout subscales with the three independent variables shows that most are moderately correlated, ranging from  $-.469$  to  $.900$ . Emotional exhaustion was more related positively to turnover intention than to affective commitment as expected, and negatively related to employee creativity. Depersonalisation was less related positively to employee creativity than to turnover intention, whereas, it was negatively related to affective commitment. A reduced personal achievement was related most strongly to turnover intention than to affective commitment in a negative way, but positively related to employee creativity. Correlations between quantitative emotional exhaustion and all of the employee creativity, affective commitment, and turnover intention were all significant. Depersonalisation was only significantly correlated with turnover intention. A reduced personal achievement was significantly correlated with affective commitment and turnover intention only.



**Table 2. Moderated regression analyses for employee burnout with each independent variable**

	Employee Creativity	Affective Commitment	Turnover Intention
R	.117	.477	.701
R Square	0.014	.227	.491
Adjusted R Square	.007	.222	.488
F	1.994	42.081**	137.991**
Employee Burnout	-.117	-.477**	.701**

Notes: Standardized parameter estimates are shown. \*\*  $p < .01$ .

From Table 2, for employee creativity, the R square was 0.014 suggesting that 1.4% of total systematic variations were connected to differences in employee burnout (emotional exhaustion, Depersonalisation, and reduced personal achievement). This means that the estimate model's stochastic error factor did not account for 98.6% of the overall systematic variations in employee creativity. The model's significance measure, F is 1.994, with a significant value greater than 0.05, which suggested that the model is statistically not significant. Therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted, and  $H_1$  is rejected.

For affective commitment, R square was 0.227 suggesting that 1.40% of total systematic variations were connected to differences in employee burnout (emotional exhaustion, Depersonalisation, and reduced personal achievement). This means that the estimate model's stochastic error factor did not account for 0.773 of the overall systematic variations in affective commitment. The model's significance measure, F is 42.081, with a significant value lesser than 0.05, which suggested that the model is statistically significant. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected, and  $H_1$  is accepted.

For turnover intention, the R square was 0.491 suggesting that 49.1% of total systematic variations were connected to differences in employee burnout (emotional exhaustion, Depersonalisation, and reduced personal achievement). This means that the estimate model's stochastic error factor did not account for 50.9% of the overall systematic variations in turnover intention. The model's significance measure, F is 137.991, with a significant value lesser than 0.05, which suggested that the model is statistically significant. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected, and  $H_1$  is accepted.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings indicated that employee burnout is not significantly related to employee creativity. In other words, an increase in emotional weariness and cynicism among workers will not have a significant influence on employee creativity. This is in contrast with Zainab et al (2020) findings which asserted that burnout has a considerable influence on employee creative performance. Emotional exhaustion was shown to have a detrimental impact on employee creativity, whereas Depersonalisation was found to have a good impact. According to the findings of Laschinger and Fida (2014), burnout causes emotional tiredness, Depersonalisation, and a loss of personal success among workers, which has a detrimental influence on their capacity to think about new ideas and create.





In the research, it was shown that employee burnout and affective commitment are significantly related. People's degree of emotional weariness and cynicism in the workplace is likely to have a significant influence on their ability to identify with and participate in their firm. Affective commitment and employee burnout are closely linked, say Haghani et al (2016). Emotional exhaustion, Depersonalisation, and worse personal success were all shown to be related to affective commitment. Nonetheless, this contradicts the results of Sarisik et al (2019) that Depersonalisation does not influence affective commitment; however, it is consistent with the findings that emotional exhaustion is adversely connected to affective commitment, and personal success positively contributes to affective commitment.

Employee burnout has a considerable impact on turnover intention, according to the research. A spike in emotional weariness and cynicism in the workplace will have a significant influence on how likely employees are to leave the organisation. Xiaoming et al (2014) discovered that employee burnout had a substantial impact on turnover intention. Turnover intention is positively correlated with emotional fatigue, Depersonalisation is unrelated to it, and reduced personal achievement is positively associated with it, the results showed. According to Meral et al (2018), emotional exhaustion has a positive effect on turnover intention, however, it is contradictory with the results of Depersonalisation having a positive influence on turnover intention.

## CONCLUSION

The study revealed that employee burnout caused as a result of pharmaceutical workers leaving the country called 'Japa' has a significant impact on affective commitment and turnover intention only. It does not significantly affect employee creativity. Emotional exhaustion was found to have a negative impact on employee creativity, whereas Depersonalisation was found to have a positive impact. Additionally, emotional exhaustion, Depersonalisation, and reduced personal achievement were all found to be negatively associated with affective commitment. Lastly, the turnover intention was found to have a positive effect on emotional exhaustion, Depersonalisation, and reduced personal achievement having a positive correlation. Nigerian pharmaceutical companies must take steps to identify and address the factors that could lead to employee burnout in order to maximise productivity and retain employees.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study have important implications for the stakeholders in the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry. Pharmaceutical companies should focus on identifying and addressing the factors that contribute to burnout in order to maximise employee productivity and retention. It is also important for pharmaceutical companies to provide employees with adequate resources and support to help them cope with the pressures of work. This could also include providing access to mental health services, such as counselling, and offering programs to help employees maintain good physical and mental health.

Pharmaceutical companies need to provide employees with appropriate rewards and recognition for their efforts. This could include providing bonuses or promotions based on performance, as well as providing incentives such as vacations or other rewards. More so,



creating a positive work environment such as encouraging a culture of open communication and collaboration, promoting autonomy and teamwork, and providing employees with a sense of ownership in their work is important will likely make employees remain committed to their roles and less likely to experience burnout.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

The findings of the study are particularly important for Nigerian pharmaceutical companies, as it provides a comprehensive understanding of the issue of employee burnout due to 'Japa Syndrome'. The study is built on the Maslach Inventory Model, which has been widely used in the study of burnout. This model helps to identify the three components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, Depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment) and their effects on the employee. The study also provides insight into the factors that could lead to employee burnout, which is important for companies to maximise productivity and retain employees. The findings of the study apply to other industries facing the same issues of employee burnout due to 'Japa Syndrome'.

### **Suggestions for Further Study**

Further research is needed to explore the impact of 'Japa Syndrome' on other factors related to employee performance, such as job satisfaction, motivation, and engagement. Additionally, research should focus on the strategies that pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria can employ to prevent employee burnout and increase employee retention. Furthermore, research should be conducted to compare the impact of 'Japa Syndrome' on employees in different industries, such as the banking and technology sectors.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study was conducted using only a convenience sample of 184 Nigerian pharmaceutical workers. This limits the generalisability of the results due to the potential for selection bias. Also, the study was built on the Maslach Burnout Inventory Model, which may not accurately reflect the experience of all employees. Additionally, the study did not take into account external factors that could contribute to employee burnout, such as work environment and job market conditions. More so, the study did not consider the potential impact of burnout on other factors, such as job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviour and job performance.



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