



Emotional Intelligence in Organizational Commitment as a Sample of University Lecturers Burnout

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the moderating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between burnout and organizational commitment in a sample of university lecturers. Four hundred and forty-six (446) participants comprising 279 males and 167 females between the ages of 28 and 69 ($M = 47.72$, $SD = 9.66$) were drawn from the Faculties using cluster and purposive sampling techniques. The study was a correlational in which the 22-item Maslach Burnout Inventory, 18-item Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, and 10-item Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale were administered for data collection. Moderated Multiple Hierarchical Regression analysis was used for data analysis. Results indicated that utilization of emotion positively predicted affective organizational commitment ($\beta = .16$, $t = 2.43$, $p < .05$); regulation of others' emotion significantly predicted continuance organizational commitment positively ($\beta = .20$, $t = 3.09$, $p < .01$) while emotional exhaustion negatively predicted affective organizational commitment and continuance organizational commitment ($\beta = -.15$, $t = -2.93$, $p < .05$; $\beta = -.05$, $t = -2.27$, $p < .01$), respectively. Feeling of reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization positively predicted continuance organizational commitment ($\beta = .89$, $t = 40.66$, $p < .01$; $\beta = .06$, $t = 2.58$, $p < .01$), respectively. Similarly, feeling of reduced personal accomplishment positively predicted normative commitment ($\beta = .54$, $t = 12.62$, $p < .01$). Emotional intelligence did not moderate the relationship between burnout and organizational commitment. The results of this study were discussed, the implications of the study were highlighted and suggestions were made for further studies. It has been recommended that policy makers in tertiary institutions, especially universities should consider policies that will enhance utilization of emotion and regulation of others emotion dimensions of emotional intelligence in order to enhance affective and continuance organizational commitment of lecturers. Such policies should also create conditions to reduce emotional exhaustion component of burnout in order to enhance affective and continuance organizational commitment of lecturers.

Keywords: *Burnout, emotional Intelligence, job commitment, organizational commitment,*

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Introduction

In today's global world where globalization is taking place in every sphere, Universities which represent the most significant foundation for the determination of educational development as well as a major source of the workforce in every nation is not left out (Agrawal & Jain, 2020). Organizational success for universities leans heavily on their paramount key resource for increasing the skills, knowledge, creativity, intelligence, devotion, and attitudes of the university community, their teachers (Khan et al, 2013).

Teaching is a job which involves multidimensional human interaction and the transmission of knowledge from teachers to students. This noble profession can be demanding as university lecturers are expected at all times to boost their professional competence and adapt to changing methods of research, instructions, mentoring and conveyance of knowledge (Graça et al, 2020; Ros & Oleksiyenko, 2017). As their job demand increases, considering the findings of this study, tertiary institutions especially universities should create conditions (e.g. programmes and policies) that will reduce burnout especially emotional exhaustion in order to enhance affective and continuance organizational commitment. These policies should also be designed in a way that certain level of feeling of reduced personal accomplishment can enhance continuance and normative organizational commitment of lecturers.

In addition, these programs and policies should help to build the emotional intelligence of lecturers especially their utilization of emotion and regulation of others' emotion in order to enhance affective and continuance organizational commitment. Furthermore, universities can rely on the impact of marital status and educational level in understanding the organizational commitment of their lecturers. This study has provided a better insight for academicians, researchers, University Management and Stakeholders to understand the nature of the relationship between emotional intelligence, burnout and organizational commitment and how to utilize the knowledge acquired for greater benefits and advantage. Liabilities inherent in the university work environment, such as, lack of adequate infrastructures and teaching aids, as well as limited resources and grants to conduct research results in low organizational commitment (Shafiq & Rana, 2016; Yusoff & Khan, 2013). Organizational commitment is a concept that reduces the factors that can cause employees to leave the organization and integrates the employee with the organization (Yalçın et al (2021) and could be defined as an employee's strong belief in and acceptance of an organization's goals and values, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization to reach these goals and objectives and strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. The term also refers to employees' attachment to an organization and identification with its goals (Dalal & Crede, 2013). The concept of organizational commitment comprises three facets which include affective, continuance and normative commitment.

Affective commitment involves the affirmative feelings of belongingness and attachment to the affairs of an employing organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Affective commitment compels the employees to persist with the employing organization due to their personal fulfilment and accomplishments as a result of their emotional attachment to the organization. For example, a university lecturer who values certain job characteristics such as autonomy would identify and be involved or care for the university, take pride in the university, be willing to put in extra efforts in the discharge of their duties, make sacrifices for the good of the university, be loyal and have a strong desire to maintain membership in the university (Nkhukhu-Orlando et al., 2019). Affective commitment when compared with normative commitment and continuance commitment is reported to be an essential factor in key outcomes such as work performance and productivity, and has been shown to have the strongest positive relation with positive work behaviours. The attitudinal and behavioural components in affective commitment have the most significant positive effect on performance as a result of the extra effort exerted beyond the call of duty in order to achieve organisational goals (Jayatilake & Bandula, 2016; Nkhukhu-Orlando et al., 2019).

Continuance commitment refers to the degree of commitment employees feel toward the employing organization when they consider the penalty of quitting the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1984). This relates to an employees' assessment of whether the cost of leaving the organization is greater than the cost of staying in the organization. Employees having strong continuance commitment continue with the employer because they feel that it is essential to remain in the organization. This is derived from instrumental

attachment to the organisation (Thabane et al., 2018). Hence, the employee stays in the organization as a result of side-bets or benefits enjoyed. For example, a lecturer working in a department where there is adequate number of academic staff with several others seeking to be employed, would not be eager to leave – as in a widely used metaphoric phrase of ‘a bird in hand is worth two in the bush’. In such a case, being anxious about job loss would therefore be positively related to willingness to stay. Seen in another way, job insecurity can make people more committed and appreciative of their current workplace (Furåker & Berglund, 2015).

Normative commitment is described as an understanding of the obligation to remain in an organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996). This is based on ideology or obligation and is affected largely by one’s personal experience, cultural background, and socialization path (Meyer & Allen, 1991). In normative commitment, the employee feels morally obligated to the organization (Pinho et al, 2020). It has a dual nature and can be experienced either as a moral duty or a sense of indebtedness (Jaros, 2017; Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). In normative commitment, the employee’s stay with the organization is as a result of a sense of duty or a sense of indebtedness. For example, a lecturer with a unique advantage may feel that leaving the university would create a void that will affect the students negatively and affect his department’s chances during accreditation and so many other academic exercises. In such a case, his continued stay in the university is as a result of moral obligation and his value system.

Existing research provides empirical evidence to support affective, continuance, and normative commitment types (Eskandaricharati, 2013; Mercurio, 2015; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). These three components of commitment are present at different levels when organizational commitment develops and the varying levels each person has is as a result of differences in one’s values and experiences which in turn affect other work behaviours (Meyer et al, 2002).

Following globalization (inter and trans-nationalization) that have permeated tertiary education, universities have adopted a major approach to stay aboard financially which is by adopting academic capitalism (Hague, 2016). For example for a given Nigerian university to stay strong and resourceful when faced with heavy competition with other international universities, it becomes capitalistic, Faculty members are viewed as producers of capital (not educators), students as consumers (not learners), while business/industry, accreditors, and Non-Governmental Organizations are seen as valued business partners (Somers et al., 2018). Thus, the University management as capitalistic employers demands commitment and performance from lecturers so as to achieve its objectives. Reduced performance irrespective of higher job demands and dearth of scholarly publications results in unpleasant sanctions such as denial or delay in promotion, pay, suspension and even termination of employment (Ajuwon & Ajuwon, 2018; Archibong et al, 2010; Beall, 2017). The situation is further compounded by inadequate job-resources (Adesola, 1991), which in-turn depletes the lecturer’s resources, thereby increasing strain and predisposing University lecturers to stress and burnout (Omoniyi & Ogunsamni, 2010). Stress, a known precursor to burnout, has been proven to result in low organizational commitment (Bhatti et al, 2016) while burnout itself is a known syndrome that influences commitment levels (Bavani et al, 2016).

The concept of burnout is considered as a psychological syndrome specific to professionals performing human services or support tasks for other people (Maroco & Campos, 2012; Tschiesner & Farnet, 2016), which has also been found to be prevalent among University staff (Anita et al, 2014; Nassar et al, 2019), and a major occupational hazard among teachers worldwide (Rostami et al, 2015) with an incidence rate of up to 68% among University Teaching staff (Ndongo et al 2018). Burnout is a response to ongoing emotional pressures and depletion of the individual’s coping resources which occurs as a result of prolonged exposure to stress in work and life (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). It is also seen as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do people-work of some kind (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a). Burnout also refers to a psychological process, a series of attitudinal and emotional reactions that an employee goes through as a result of job-related and personal experiences (Jackson & Schuler, 1983). Studies (e.g. Chen & Chen, 2018; Kuruüzüm et al, 2008; Ugwu et al, 2020) have shown that burnout arises when there is significant disharmony between the nature of a person’s job and the nature of the person doing the job. This statement suggests that burnout is not solely a personal problem; rather, it is a social/environmental problem related to a person’s occupation.

The concept of burnout has three dimensions and they are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a). Emotional exhaustion involves lack of energy and the state of an individual being emotionally depleted. This aspect of burnout is the most encountered, reported and examined (Sarisik et al, 2019). Emotionally exhausted workers feel excessive strain and consider themselves used up and lack zeal to fulfil job related responsibilities (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Hellesoy et al, 2000; Kim et al, 2007; Maslach & Goldberg, 1998; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 2001). They often present symptoms such as fear, nervousness, anger, irritability, loss of energy, sense of helplessness, fatigue, and confrontation with death (Khan & Zafar, 2013). The second dimension of burnout is depersonalization, which occurs when individuals have unfavourable, callous and cynical behaviours and feelings toward others and their organizations (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Hellesoy et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2007; Leiter & Maslach, 1988; Maslach & Golberg, 1998; Maslach & Jackson, 1981b; Maslach et al., 2001). This callous and cynical behaviour may arise as an external response to exhaustion and low commitment towards the organization and is captured when a lecturer distances him/herself from people, and behaves in ways that are discordant to the organization and the overall ethics of the teaching profession. The last dimension of burnout is reduced personal accomplishment, which affects self-evaluation. This aspect of burnout is characterized by a feeling of inefficacy with the students and the job. Workers with reduced personal accomplishment tend to evaluate themselves negatively, feeling dissatisfied with their achievements and incapable of overcoming the demands of the job (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Hellesoy et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2007; Leiter & Maslach, 1988; Maslach & Golberg, 1998; Maslach & Jackson, 1981a). The relationship between personal accomplishment and the other two dimensions of job burnout is more complex since it is difficult to gain a sense of accomplishment when feeling exhausted or when helping people toward whom one is indifferent to (Maslach et al., 2001). Although emotional exhaustion and depersonalization result from work overload and social conflict, reduced personal accomplishment results from a lack of relevant job resources such as autonomy (Maslach et al., 2001).

Cordes and Dougherty (1993) categorized the results of burnout as physical (fatigue, insomnia, headaches); emotional (depression, irritability), interpersonal (tendency to withdraw from friends/colleagues, reduced socialization); behavioural (smoking, drug abuse, alcohol use); and attitudinal (low level of organizational commitment). Studies (e.g. Gonen & Grinberg, 2020; Nikolaev & Bautista, 2018; Srivastava et al., 2016) have shown that personal characteristics such as emotional intelligence adds an extra dimension to the mindset of an employee cognitively and behaviourally thereby helping them handle job associated situations that can induce burnout. Abraham (2004) asserts that emotionally intelligent teachers possess the capacity to deal with the odd situations they experience during the teaching and learning process and overcome several hurdles with an optimistic mindset. According to Mayer et al. (2000) emotional intelligence includes four aspects: (1) the ability to accurately perceive, assess, and express emotions; (2) the ability to promote thinking using emotion; (3) the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and (4) the ability to regulate and manage emotions.

Weinberger (2009) identified emotional intelligence as intentionally making your emotions work in your favor by using them to guide your actions in ways to improve your results. Thus, emotional intelligence is identified by its outcome. According to Ugwu (2011), the bedrock of emotional intelligence is the ability to delay gratification or regulate one's emotions in order to attain a desired goal. Emotional intelligence also refers to the ability to control emotions of oneself and others and distinguish them from each other, by applying this information to guide one's own thinking and action (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). A person higher on emotional intelligence will be able to manage his/her emotions as well as others' emotions quite well. If a person is not able to do so, he/she would get stressed, depressed and frustrated which would lead to a job burned-out person (Srivastava et al, 2016). Görgens-Ekermans and Brand (2012) suggests that increased levels of emotional intelligence can produce positive results at the individual level, such as increasing emotional coping resources that can help mitigate burnout as well as positive organizational results such as improvement in service delivery and organizational commitment. This implies that improved emotional intelligence skills may also help lecturers cope with the emotional demands of working in a teaching environment that can be stressful as well as boost a lecturer's level of commitment to his/her University.

Given that organizational commitment is a desirable work attitude that has been proven to affect job performance positively; some studies (e.g. Srivastava et al., 2016; Seyyedmoharrami et al, 2019; Sarıışık et al, 2019; Bavani et al, 2016) have shown that highly committed employees are more prone to burnout thereby creating the need to identify a buffer. From 54 empirical studies that Khan et al (2019) reviewed several moderators of burnout among academics have been identified. The moderators fall into two categories namely, job resources and personal resources. A critical personal resource that has elicited research interest and believed to be a moderator between goals and goal-directed behaviours, between stressors and unfavourable reactions, and other variables, is emotional intelligence (Aziz & Pangil, 2017; Côté, 2014; Jafri, 2020; Elipe et al, 2015; Shoukat et al, 2019; Ugwu et al, 2017). Dearth of scientific literature that investigate the moderating role of emotional intelligence on two key variables of interest, burnout and organizational commitment among academics using a Nigerian sample prompted the researchers' interest to explore the moderating role of emotional intelligence in burnout and organizational commitment relations among university lecturers.

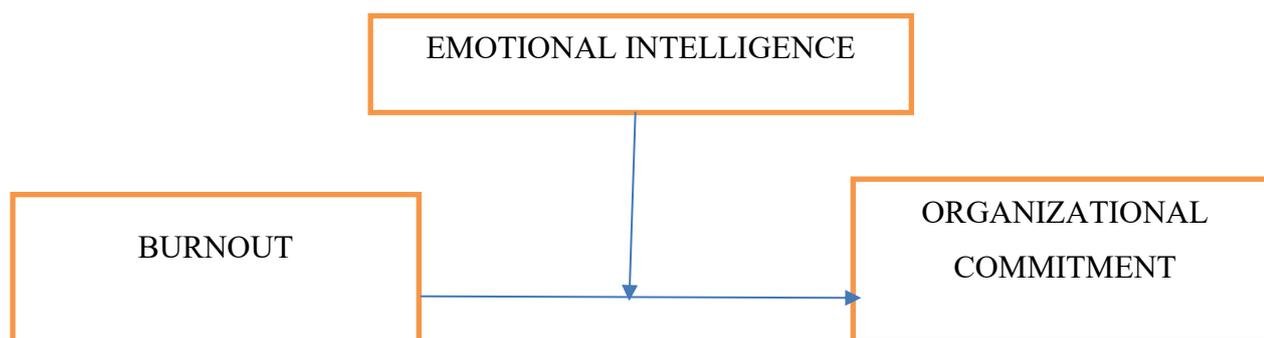


Figure 1

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. Burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feelings of reduced personal accomplishment) will negatively predict organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative).
2. Emotional intelligence will positively predict organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative).
3. Emotional intelligence will weaken the negative prediction of organizational commitment by burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feelings of reduced personal accomplishment).

Method

Participants

Four hundred and forty-six (446) participants (lecturers) comprising 279 males and 167 females between the ages of 28 to 69 ($M = 47.73$, $SD = 9.66$) drawn from all the Faculties and General Studies Division in Enugu State University of Science and Technology using cluster and purposive sampling techniques participated in the study. Purposive sampling technique was used as guided by the inclusion and exclusion criteria to select the participants. Lecturers that were on regular appointment and had been in the service of the University for a minimum of three years met the required criteria for participating in the study while those that were on sabbatical or visiting or contract or adjunct appointment were excluded. Four hundred and one (401) were married while 45 were single, 284 possessed Ph.D./Medical Fellowship degree/certificate while 162 were M. Sc. degree holders.

Instrument

Burnout Scale

Burnout was measured using 22-item Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) designed to measure the extent to which an employee experiences chronic work related stress. This Maslach Burnout Inventory has three subscales measuring emotional exhaustion, feeling of reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization. Sample items include: "I feel like I am at the end of my rope", "I worry that this job

is hardening me emotionally.” Ratings were made using a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (never), to 6 (everyday).

Maslach and Jackson (1981) reported the following internal consistency reliability estimates (Cronbach alpha) for emotional exhaustion (.89), feeling of reduced personal accomplishment (.74) and depersonalization (.72) while test-retest Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were 0.82 for emotional exhaustion, 0.80 for reduced feeling of personal accomplishment and 0.64 for depersonalization.

Using an Asian sample Wickramasinghe et al. (2018) obtained internal consistency alpha reliability coefficients of .83 for emotional exhaustion, .86 for personal accomplishment and .88 for depersonalization. Coker (1999) using a Nigerian sample revalidated the scale and obtained a Cronbach’s alpha of .86 and split half reliability of .57. By correlating the Maslach and Jackson’s (1981) Burnout Inventory with Psychophysiological Patterns of Anxiety Scale Omuluabi (1996) obtained concurrent validity coefficient in the range of .01 to .36 while the reliability Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .86 and Split-half of .57 was obtained. Okonkwo (2011) obtained split-half reliability coefficient of 0.63 for emotional exhaustion subscale, 1.00 for depersonalization subscale and 0.75 for feeling of reduced personal accomplishment subscale. Okonkwo (2013) reported a Cronbach alpha of .81. Olebara and Okonkwo (2019) reported a reliability Cronbach alpha of .72 for the overall Maslach Burnout Inventory.

The researchers obtained a Cronbach alpha reliability index of .89 for the overall Maslach Burnout Inventory.

Organizational Commitment Scale

Organizational commitment was measured using 18-item Organizational Commitment Scale (Meyer & Allen, 1991) designed to measure the extent to which a worker is attached and loyal towards the achievement of the goals and values of his/her organization. This Organizational Commitment Scale has three sub-scales measuring affective, continuance and normative commitment. Sample items include: “I will be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization”, “I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one’s organization.” Ratings were made using 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). There were both direct scoring and reverse scoring items. The directly scored items were 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 13 14, 15, 16 and 18 while the reverse scored items were 3, 4, 5 and 17.

Meyer and Allen (1991), reported internal consistency reliability estimates (Cronbach’s alpha) for affective commitment (.82), continuance commitment (.74) and normative commitment (.83). Similarly using African samples, Gbadomosi (2006) obtained internal consistency alpha reliability coefficients of .73 for affective commitment, .74 for continuance commitment and .66 for normative organizational commitment while Gbadomosi and Nwosu (2011) obtained a Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient of .87 for the scale in a Nigerian sample. Moreover, Mugizi et al (2016) obtained internal consistency alpha reliability coefficients of .91 (affective commitment), .85 (continuance commitment), and .74 (normative commitment). Similarly, Ebeh et al (2017) reported internal consistency Cronbach’s alpha of .92 (affective), .92 (continuance), and .78 (normative) while split-half coefficients were .98 (affective), .85 (continuance), and .77 (normative). Okonkwo et al. (2019) reported a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.76 for the overall Organizational Commitment Scale. In addition, Oranika et al. (2020) reported a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.73 for the overall scale items. The researchers obtained a Cronbach’s alpha reliability index of .71 for the overall scale.

Emotional Intelligence Scale

Emotional intelligence was measured using 10-item Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (Davies et al., 2010) designed to measure a worker’s appraisal, regulation and utilization of his/her own emotions to achieve positive results. This scale has five subscales appraisal of own emotion (measured by items 1 and 2), appraisal of others’ emotions (measured by items 3 and 4), regulation of own emotions (measured by items 5 and 6), regulation of others’ emotions (measured by items 7 and 8), and utilization of emotions (measured by items 9 and 10). Sample items include: “I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them”, “I have control over my emotions.” Ratings were done using 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Davies et al. (2010) reported internal consistency reliability estimates (Cronbach’s alpha) of .90 and test-retest reliability of .78 for the overall scale; .48 for appraisal of own emotions; .35 for appraisal of others’ emotion; .40 for regulation of own emotions; .41 for regulation of others’ emotion and .40 for utilization of emotions. Davies et al, (2010) also obtained a validity of .97 for the entire

scale. Ugwu et al. (2017) obtained a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .76 in a Nigerian sample. The researchers obtained a Cronbach's alpha reliability index of .89.

Procedure

The researcher obtained ethical approval from the Chairman Research Ethics committee, Department of Psychology Enugu State University of Science and Technology for this study and an introductory letter from the Head of Department of Psychology, Enugu State University of Science and Technology. A letter of permission was also obtained from the Management of the Enugu State of University of Science and Technology for easy access to Deans, Heads of Departments and the participants. The researchers also recruited and trained willing Departmental secretaries, Faculty Officers, Departmental staff as research assistants and got them familiarized with the procedures to be adopted when administering and retrieving copies of the questionnaire from lecturers in their respective Faculty/Department/Division during working hours. Participants were drawn from each Faculty (cluster) and the General Studies Division. Purposive sampling technique was applied to exclude members of the academic staff whose length of service in the University was not up to three years, as well as those on sabbatical or visiting or contract or adjunct appointment in the University. Copies of the questionnaire were evenly distributed to the entire sample that was available during the period, and each was asked to study them carefully, complete and return to their departmental secretaries. Participants were assured that their participation was voluntary, for research purposes only and that their data would remain confidential. The test instrument was distributed to the entire sample size of five hundred and eighty five (585) and from this number, four hundred and fifty three (77.43%) returned their questionnaire. Out of 453 that returned their questionnaire seven (0.11%) were discarded because they were improperly completed and data from the remaining four hundred and forty six (76.24%) participants were used for the analysis.

Design and Statistics

Correlational design was adopted while multiple hierarchical regression analysis was applied as the statistical tool using SPSS version 21 and SPSS Process Macro 3 to test the hypotheses in the study and to determine the moderation, direction and strength of the relationship among the study variables.

Discussion

Considering the results, the first hypothesis which stated that burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feelings of reduced personal accomplishment) will negatively predict organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative) was supported by some of the findings. According to these findings, all the dimensions of burnout were significant predictors of different dimensions of organizational commitment (emotional exhaustion predicted both affective and continuance organizational commitment negatively, depersonalization predicted normative organizational commitment positively while feelings of reduced personal accomplishment was found to be positive predictors of both normative and continuance organizational commitment). This outcome is in congruence with earlier studies (e.g. Erysil, 2016; Nasir & Ahmed, 2019; Akdemir, 2019; Ranjabar et al. 2020) which supported the earlier hypothesis that burnout was a significant negative predictor of organizational commitment. However, the findings of this study are contrary to Griffin et al (2010) finding that no significant relationship existed between the two variables.

The first finding of the first hypothesis indicates that emotional exhaustion was a significant negative predictor of affective organizational commitment. This shows that lecturers who had high affective organizational commitment were more likely to put in extra efforts to achieve organizational goals, experience excessive job demands and strains leading to depletion of their energy. This finding implies that the more the lecturers were exposed to excessive work demands with inadequate job resources and continuous strain the less they were likely to develop strong emotional attachment to their working organizations. This finding is in tandem with findings made by Saruşik et al (2019), and Nasir and Ahmed (2019) but contrary to findings by Gemlik et al (2010) who demonstrated a positive significant effect of emotional exhaustion on affective organizational commitment ($r=.533, p<0.05$).

The second finding from the first hypothesis indicates that emotional exhaustion negatively predicted continuance organizational commitment. This gives credence to study by Sarisik et al. (2019) who found

that emotional exhaustion had a negative impact on continuance organizational commitment and contrary to Nasir and Ahmed (2019) finding of a significant positive relationship between the two variables. The finding of this study demonstrates that the higher the emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout, the lower the level of continuance organizational commitment among the lecturers. The possible explanation for this is that lecturers who were emotionally exhausted had undergone prolonged strain and pressure due to excessive job demands (unusually large number of students they were required to teach, grade and supervise within limited timelines) without corresponding job resources making them feel emotionally drained, thus weakening their zeal and desire to remain in the university.

The third finding from the first hypothesis shows that feeling of reduced personal accomplishment positively predicted continuance organizational commitment. This can be interpreted to mean that the more lecturers perceived themselves in a negative light and feel they had nothing more to offer, the more they were likely to maintain the status quo in the organization which appeared to be a more desirable alternative than entering the competitive job market that would probably favor those with higher levels of feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Thus, feeling of inefficacy among lecturers and negative perception of self and incapability in overcoming job demands increased the likelihood of staying committed to the organization. The above result does not conform to Gemlik et al. (2010) who found a negative significant relationship between reduced personal accomplishment and continuance organizational commitment.

This finding arguably demonstrates that the more the lecturers experienced feeling of reduced personal accomplishment the stronger their desire to remain in the institution. This suggests that their low perception of themselves made them feel content with what the university offered them and had no strong hope/thought of desiring a higher promising job. This point alludes to lack of alternatives, high unemployment rates in Nigeria and the limited job opportunities outside the university.

The fourth finding from the first hypothesis revealed that feeling of reduced personal accomplishment was a significant positive predictor of normative organizational commitment. The finding is in agreement with that of Gemlik et al. (2010) which revealed that feeling of reduced personal accomplishment had strong predictive power over normative organizational commitment. The inference we can draw from this result is that lecturers with reduced feeling of personal accomplishment developed their strong desire to continue to stay in the establishment because of their sense of duty, feelings of obligation and felt it was responsible and morally right to remain in the organization which employed them amidst prevalent high unemployment level in Nigeria.

The fifth finding from the first hypothesis shows that depersonalization positively predicted continuance organizational commitment. This suggests that the more the lecturers had unfavorable, callous and cynical behaviors or feelings towards their task, students, fellow workers and University, the more they wanted to remain in the university. In a depersonalized state, the lecturer was emotionally detached from the university, staff and task. In such a state, he or she was not concerned about the performance and success of the university and had strong desire to remain whether by hook or crook because of the University's instrumental value to him/her. These findings are in line with the assertions made by the Job-Demands Resources Model (Demerouti et al., 2001) that every profession has its risk factors associated with extreme levels of stress that may lead to burnout. This Job Demands-Resources theory also asserts that the greater the mismatch between the person and the job demands, the greater the likelihood of burnout; conversely, the greater the match, the greater the likelihood of organizational commitment.

The second hypothesis which stated that emotional intelligence will positively predict organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative) was supported. Findings indicate that utilization of emotion as a component of emotional intelligence positively predicted affective organizational commitment and regulation of others emotion positively predicted continuance organizational commitment. Following these findings; out of five areas of emotional intelligence tested utilization of emotion was found to be a strong significant positive predictor of affective commitment while regulation of others' emotion revealed a strong significant positive predictive value over continuance commitment. These findings are incongruence with previous studies (e.g. Shafiq & Rana. 2016; Kumari & Priya, 2017; Akinwumi & Ayorinde, 2020) which demonstrated that emotional intelligence had significant positive relationships with all three

components of organizational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative organizational commitment).

The first finding of the second hypothesis stated that utilization of emotion was a significant positive predictor of affective organizational commitment. This implies that lecturers who utilized a variety of emotion in dealing/coping with their work challenges develop a sense of accomplishment as a result of emotional attachment. Accordingly, odd situations and intense emotional labor that accompany the teaching profession require that lecturers be tolerant, utilize a variety of feelings and emotion without losing their temper in the discharge of their duties. These individuals in human service professions know how to get rid of odd emotions and use positive emotions in overcoming difficult situations which often times heightens personal fulfillment and endears lecturers to their working organizations. This is in agreement with Shafiq and Rana (2016) whose study demonstrated that emotional intelligence was a significant positive predictor of affective organizational commitment.

In addition, the second finding from the second hypothesis found that regulation of others' emotion was a positive predictor of continuance organizational commitment. The practical implication of this finding suggests that regulation of others emotion strengthen teamwork culture, maintains healthy work ethics, helps build trust with students and colleagues, and enhance positive work environment which further strengthens the ability to stay committed with the organization. The result of the second hypotheses is in agreement with some other studies like Shafiq and Rana (2016) whose results indicated a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and continuance commitment, as well as Mehboob-Ul-Hassan, (2016) whose study revealed that teachers with higher levels of emotional intelligence had higher levels of maintaining membership in the organization. Other studies (e.g. Kumari & Priya, 2017; Năstasă& Farcas, 2015; Majid, 2017) also found a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment although they did not explore the relationship between the different components of emotional intelligence and organizational commitment dimensions together. The result of the second hypotheses are in agreement with the assertions of the Job-Demands Resources model as personal resources such as emotional intelligence strengthens an individual's capacity to commit to his/her organization regardless of the demands of the teaching profession.

The third hypothesis which posited that emotional intelligence will weaken the negative prediction of organizational commitment by burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feelings of reduced personal accomplishment) was disconfirmed because emotional intelligence failed to moderate the relationship between burnout and organizational commitment. This implies that emotional intelligence did not buffer the negative impact of burnout on organizational commitment. This result is in not in tandem with findings by Stamouli and Gerbeth (2021) which revealed that emotional competence (interchangeable used with emotional intelligence) moderated the relationship between commitment and job satisfaction. It further contrasts with Lu and Kuo (2016) study which found support for the moderating role of emotional intelligence in job stress and related outcomes as well as Nadeem (2018) which demonstrated that emotional intelligence acts a moderating variable in job outcomes.

Implications of the findings of the study

The findings of this study have theoretical, empirical and practical implications. Theoretically, the findings of this study have given credence to the theoretical framework applied in this the study namely, the Job-Demands Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2001) which asserted that higher job-demands leads to emotional exhaustion which invariably lead to lower levels of organizational commitment. The model further posits that job resources increase organizational commitment and emotional intelligence is a personal resource that has been proven to enhance organizational commitment. Empirically, the findings of this study are in tandem with earlier studies. For example, Letam (2017) found a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment while Wang et al. (2020) found that burnout was a significant negative predictor of organizational commitment.

Findings from this study have practical implications for universities. For instance, Rudow (1999, in Khan, 2014) provided empirical support that proved that burnout and low commitment are among the major problems associated with the teaching profession. To address this problems, Năstasăand Farcas (2014) and

earlier by Görgens-Ekermans and Brand (2012) provided remedy through their finding that emotional intelligence (ability to manage own emotions and impulses, to be more flexible, detached from problems and to express emotions in an assertive manner) leads to reduction of the burnout syndrome among employees. To this end, this present study relying on its findings suggests that these two-pronged problem (burnout and low organizational commitment) in the university can be addressed when trainings in emotional intelligence (emotional intelligence, which is a skill that helps individuals manage their emotional affairs and enhance sense of wellbeing and personal fulfillment leading to organizational commitment) are mounted. Emotions are rooted in all activities of human service professionals such as lecturers and consequently trainings that will help lecturers regulate their own and others' emotion, as well as utilize their own emotion are most desired for their own and their universities' benefit.

Limitations of the study and suggestions for further studies

The study has some notable limitations.

First, data was generated from participants at one point in time using self-report measures which increases social desirability responses and prone to faking. A mixed method would have helped to elicit more qualitative data to address the objectives of the study. The study considered only lecturers of Enugu State University of Science and Technology thereby reducing the external validity and generalization of the findings. Future researchers should expand the scope of this study to a combination of other lecturers across the country using the six-geopolitical zones of Nigeria to ensure adequate representation for more valid generalizations. In addition, this study was a cross-sectional study and precludes causal inference. A longitudinal research is required for more robust findings.

Conclusion

Considering the findings of this study, tertiary institutions especially universities should create conditions (e.g. programmes and policies) that will reduce burnout especially emotional exhaustion in order to enhance affective and continuance organizational commitment. These policies should also be designed in a way that certain level of feeling of reduced personal accomplishment can enhance continuance and normative organizational commitment of lecturers. In addition, these programs and policies should help to build the emotional intelligence of lecturers especially their utilization of emotion and regulation of others' emotion in order to enhance affective and continuance organizational commitment. Furthermore, universities can rely on the impact of marital status and educational level in understanding the organizational commitment of their lecturers. In conclusion, this study has provided a better insight for academicians, researchers, University Management and Stakeholders to understand the nature of the relationship between emotional intelligence, burnout and organizational commitment and how to utilize the knowledge acquired for greater benefits and advantage.

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