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# BURNOUT SYMPTOMS AND VOCATIONAL BUSINESS EDUCATORS' TURNOVER INTENTIONS: A STUDY OF NIGERIA'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH

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**Abstract**
On the bases of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, the central aim of the study was twofold. First, it examines the levels of burnout with each symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) and Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions. Second, the study tested a conceptual model that incorporates direct relationships between burnout with each symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) and Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions. A quantitative research design was adopted toactualize the aim of this study. The participants consisted of 138 Vocational Business Educators from 13 Nigeria's Public Universities in South-South. The authors applied descriptive statistics (e.g. Mean and Standard Deviation), and inferential statistics (e.g. Spearman's rho correlation and linear regression via 10000 resamples bootstrap estimate). The results showed that the levels ofburnout with each symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) and Vocational Business Educators' turnover intention were very high. The results further showed that burnout with each symptoms (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) were significant positive predictors of Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions. Furthermore, limitations of the study and implications of the results were discussed.
**Keywords**. Burnout Symptoms, public universities, turnover Intentions, vocational business educator

## Introduction

Burnout has long been regarded as having a negative influence on employee's attitudes and behaviours. Empirical investigations and research suggest that employees who are engaged on the job are highly engrossed and more dedicated (Bilal, Farook & Hayat, 2019; Khusanova, Kang & Choi, 202; Sahni, 2021; Ajulo, 2023), whereas employees who suffer from energy or other resources depletion experience exhaustion and are likely to quit their job or leave their organization (Afuye, 2019; Lubbadeh, 2021; Kumareswaran, 2023). Burnout consist of four core symptoms: exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder (Schaufeli, Desart & De Witte, 2020a; Consiglio, Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2021; Schaufeli & De Witte, 2023; Schaufeli, De Witte, Hakanen, Kaltainen & Kok, 2023). Exhaustion could, therefore, occur when employees feel emotionally drained and engrossed with work overload, conflict between work and home, time pressure and work pressure. Mental distance, cognitive impairment and emotional impairment, on the other hand, could be associated with lack of job resources. Of the

four symptoms, distancing oneself mentally from the job or exerting cynical attitude towards the job appear to be the strongest predictor of employee's turnover intentions.

Moreover, quite a number of studies have investigated the causal relationships between burnout symptoms and employees' attitudinal outcomes. For instance, there is an empirical support for the relationships between lack of job resources, burnout and turnover intention (De Beer, Schaufeli & Bakker, 2022b).Another study also empirically found support for the relationships between each burnout symptom and employees' prosocial behaviours (as positive social behaviour that promotes the well-being and integrity of other people or society as a whole) (Bang & Reio, 2017). Yet, another study found empirical support for the relationships between workaholism, burnout and self-endangering behaviour (Yokoyama et al., 2022). In line with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, another study found an empirical support for the relationships between job demands (work overload and role ambiguity), burnout and employees' turnover intentions and depression (Cho, 2020). Also, a study found an empirical support for the relationships between job demands (e.g., qualitative, quantitative and emotional demands), burnout and turnover intentions (Sakakibara et al., 2020). In a similar vein, a study successfully tested the relationships between emotional load, burnout, psychological distress, professional inefficacy and turnover intentions (De Beer, 2021). Yet, another empirical study successfully tested the relationships between job demands (e.g., work overload), burnout and turnover intentions (De Beer et al., 2022b). All these empirical studies found negative effects as agreed with the assumptions of the JD-R model, in that burnout was found to directly and indirectly predict employees' attitudinal outcomes, including turnover intentions.

Beyond the effect of core burnout symptoms on employees' turnover intentions, understanding the differences and relationships between core burnout symptoms is germane because each symptom has distinct levels of consequences and potential causal relationships with employees' turnover intentions. Because each of the core burnout symptoms demonstrates differential and potential causal relationships with a wide range of consequences or outcomes, it is possible that employees may experience a specific symptom or two or three or all four symptoms of burnout depending on the nature of their specific work conditions. This implied that when employees suffer from more than one of the four burnout symptoms, it is conceivable that each burnout symptom may play a unique and distinctive role in predicting employees' attitudinal outcomes, such as turnover intentions. Following the aim of this study, we defined turnover intentions, as the likelihood of vocational business educators' willingness to voluntarily quit their job or leave an institution. Kusy and O'Leary-Driscoll (2020) reported that about 30% of educators quit their job or leave their institution in the first 5 years and that 84% of educators quit their job or leave their institution voluntarily.

Recent research showed that burnout can be detrimental to the workforce (Weigl et al., 2016) and can be harmful to employees' attitudinal and behavioural outcomes (Elçi, Yildiz & Karabay, 2018). In contrast, scholars and researchers suggest that distancing oneself from work can also serve as an important adaptive and coping strategy that keeps stress and burnout at bay (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Distancing oneself from work can be a form of expression that increases not only an employees' divergent and critical thinking, but can also serve as a way to alleviate frustration with problem situations. These inconsistent and mixed findings suggest a lack of conceptual and empirical clarity regarding the dynamic processes associated with the burnout symptoms. Therefore, it has become necessary to clarify empirically the extent to which burnout with each symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) can predict Vocational Business Educators turnover intentions.

The central aim of this study is twofold. First, the study attempts to examine the levels of burnout with each core symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and

emotional disorder) and Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions. Second, the study attempts to tests a conceptual model that incorporates the direct relationships between burnout with each core symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) and Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions. On the basis of these aims, the current study attempts to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of burnout with each core symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) and Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions?
2. To what extent does burnout with each core symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) predicts Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions?

It is expected that the results of this study may encourage Vocational Business Educators to stay on the job or with their institution. Current research investigations revealed thatVocational Business Education programme in Nigeria is faced with teachers' shortage (Edokpolor & Owenvbuigie, 2017b; Edokpolor, Oviawe & Okosun, 2024). This Vocational Business Educators shortage may have effect on future workforce projections for teaching profession, entrepreneurial career development and sustainable development. In the following sections, the authors provide details on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks and reviews of literature on burnout with each symptom and turnover intentions. The authors also provide details on the extent to which burnout with each symptom predict turnover intentions. The authors further provide testable hypotheses based on the propositions of the conceptual model, JD-R theory, and COR theory. Finally, the authors provide details on the research implications and limitations.

## Theoretical Framework

### *Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory*

The JD-R model was used as a theoretical framework for this present study proposed by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli in 2001. The JD-R model helps to explain how burnout can influence Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions. One of the basic assumptions of the JD-R model is that burnout and its core symptoms (e.g., exhaustion) can result in lower service delivery and job performance, and increased absenteeism and turnover.

A more specific assumption of the JD-R model is that burnout is related to employees' attitudinal outcomes. Strain reactions (i.e. stress or burnout) are likely to result in absenteeism and turnover intention. The pathway to absenteeism and turnover through exhaustion is also known as the health impairmentpathway. The JD-R model also depicted that all occupations and professions have specific risk factor associated with impaired or ill-being (i.e., burnout). According to Schaufeli, et al. (2019), burnout refers to a work-related state of exhaustion that occurs among employees, which is characterized by extreme tiredness, reduced ability to regulate cognitive and emotional processes, and mental distancing. The JD-R model is relevant to this study because it proposes a work-related psychological process, arguing that the health-impairment process in which burnout and ill health can lead to employee's turnover. Therefore, the JD-R model is related to this present study in that when Vocational Business Educators' suffer from high burnout; it may lead to turnover intentions. This implied that when Vocational Business Educators' suffer from burnout, it may positively predict turnover intentions.

### *Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory*

The COR explains why some individuals experience the stressor impaired behavioural relationship through strain, with those being less stressed having greater resources to draw on or

to cope with (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu & Westman, 2018). Employees with greater individual resources can draw on their resource reservoir and, therefore, manage experiences more advantageously (Ghafoor & Haar, 2021). High burnout risk represents a state where resources are severely or critically lacking, i.e., the reservoir of resources is "empty" and employees who suffer from high burnout risk experience acute shortage of resources. Hence, these employees may become fragile and seek ways to minimize the drainage of resources. Indeed, the COR theory has become a central theoretical approach to studying burnout (Moin, Wei & Weng, 2020), with the use of the New Burnout Assessment Tool (Otto, Van Ruysseveldt, Hoefsmit & Van Dam, 2021; Urbanaviciute, Roll, Tomas & De Witte, 2021). The COR theory was established by Hobfoll in 1989 as a significant contributor to the research on stress or burnout as a construct of a given study. The COR theory is related to this present study in that when the university administrators and managers invest more on motivational process or pathway, an antipode of health impairment process or pathway, it may reinforce Vocational Business Educators' intentions to stay with their institution, an antipode of turnover intentions.

**Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development**

The authors of this present study developed a schematic model (Figure 1) that is clearly testable. On the basis of this schematic model, some underlying assumptions were formulated. The major assumption derived from the schematic model is that when Vocational Business Educators suffer from burnout with each symptom, they may experience turnover intention. This underlying assumption aligns with both the JD-R and the COR theoretical perspectives.

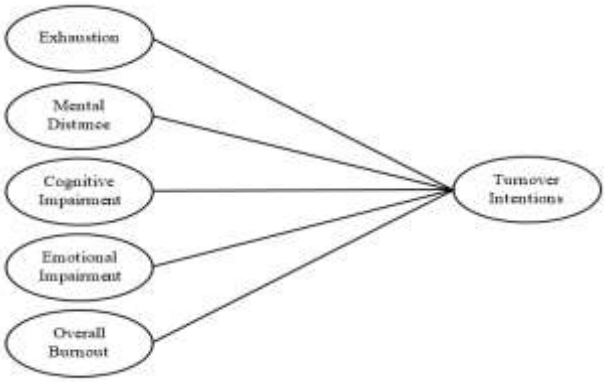



Figure 1: The Hypothesized Model of the Study.

***Burnout***

The term "burnout" was first described and used in a clinical sense in the US at the later part of the 1970s by a practicing psychologist, Herbert Freudenberger. In his study, titled "Staff burnout", he described the term 'burnout' as:

> *…. To fail, wear out, or become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources'. And that is exactly what happens when a staff member in an alternative institution burns out for whatever reasons and becomes inoperative to all intents and purposes (Freudenberger, 1974).*

Shortly after 1970, burnout was described in relation to a human service organization by academic researchers and social psychologists, Maslach and Jackson as a multi-dimensional syndrome that is characterized by exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy, which is the opposite of engagement, characterized as energy, involvement and efficacy (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). However, the term "burnout" was first described in relation to a human service organization by

Maslach, Jackson and Leiter (1997) as a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people.These early definitions have been extended to eventually every other professions and occupations. For instance, Schaufeli, Leiter and Maslach (2009) summarized this in their article, titled "Burnout: 35 years of research and practice":

> *By the late 1980s, researchers and practitioners began to recognize that burnout occurred outside the human services, for instance, among managers, entrepreneurs, and white- and blue-collar workers. Thus, the burnout metaphor was extended from the intense requirements of client service to other work requiring creativity, problem solving, or mentoring. In this more general form, burnout was defined as "a state of exhaustion in which one is cynical about the value of one's occupation and doubtful of one's capacity to perform".*

In their main findings, Schaufeli, et al. (2009) suggested that, since the turn of the 21st century, 'burnout is increasingly considered as an erosion of a positive psychological state'. Since its emergence and to date, burnout has become an increasingly popular occupational health concern, not only known to the academic and medical communities, but also increasingly used by the public in general discourse and conversation. Studies over the years have shown that burnout has some negative consequences for organizations (for example, absenteeism, poor job performance, turnover intention, productivity and job dissatisfaction). Burnout has been classified by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2022) as an occupational phenomenon and a syndrome resulting from chronic or severe workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. The WHO (2019) also defined burnout symptoms in line with burnout measurement scale, which was developed by Maslach and Jackson in 1981, named as the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), which include: exhaustion, cynicism and professional (in)efficacy. This early conceptualization implied that burnout means a psychological syndrome unfolding as a prolonged response to chronic or severe stressors on the job, consisting of exhaustion, a cynical attitude toward work, and a sense of professional inefficacy.

As research evolved over time, some glaring theoretical and practical concerns has unfolded, which made the definition of burnout to have been receiving some criticism over the past decades. This gave birth to the redefinition of burnout with its symptoms. In accordance with the development of the New Burnout Assessment Tool, Schaufeli, De Witte and Desart defined burnout as:

> *"… a work-related state of exhaustion that occurs among employees, which is characterized by extreme tiredness, reduced ability to regulate cognitive and emotional processes, and mental distancing. These four core dimensions of burnout are accompanied by depressed mood as well as by non-specific psychological and psychosomatic distress symptoms. It is caused by an imbalance between high job demands and insufficient job resources. In addition, problems outside the work domain and/or personal vulnerability may facilitate the development of burnout" (Schaufeli, et al., 2019, p. 30).*

This broad definition implied that burnout is a metaphor characterized by exhaustion naturally accompanied by the inability to regulate cognitive and emotional processes and mental distance that acts as a counterproductive and ineffective coping strategy (Desart& De Witte, 2019). The definition of burnout as a work-related strain meshes with the New Burnout Assessment Tool by covering its four core interrelated symptoms (i.e., exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder, and emotional disorder). Exhaustion is defined as a severe or chronic loss of physical and mental energy; emotional disorder is defined as an overwhelming and intense emotions,

including anger, frustration, sadness, and irritability; cognitive disorder is defined as a cognitive deficits of memory, attention, and concentration; and mental distance is defined as the detachment from work due to strong reluctance or aversion (Schaufeli et al., 2020a&b). Unlike the old MBI, the New Burnout Assessment Tool has strong empirical evidence of a higher-order construct (Haar, 2021; Hadzibajramović, Schaufeli & De Witte, 2020; Sakakibara, et al., 2020). From this construct, employees with the most chronic burnout score are referred to as being burned out (Haar, 2021) or having or experiencing a high burnout risk.

***Turnover Intention***

Turnover intention often predicts actual quitting behaviour. For instance, turnover intention may strongly be indicative of a person's intent to voluntarily withdraw from an organization. Turnover intention means the subjective perception of an individual to quit a current job for other opportunities. It refers to an employee's perception of the likelihood that he or she will leave their current job or company due to a variety of factors (Khan, Shah, Haider, Aziz & Kazmi, 2020). Turnover intention involves the employees' awareness and thought about vacating their organization position (Maseri, Tajuddin, &Monil, 2022). The intention of employees to quit their jobs appears to be predicted by burnout, which can result in tremendous losses in an organization (Akgunduz & Eryilmaz, 2018).

Employee turnover denotes the phenomenon of employees' saying goodbye to an organization willingly. The decision of an employee to say goodbye to an organization is exorbitant for the organization as well as the individual (Inavalpotro, Pérez & Quiroga, 2019). Turnover intention refers to the chances that a person will leave the current job within a short period of time. In a simple word, it is the employee's intention to change the job (Varghese & Kumar, 2019). Turnover intention may be explicated as an intention of saying goodbye to an organization. High turnover is generally explicated as bad, and it is presumed expensive as it threatens quality. Turnover intention is seen as a two-dimensional concept, divided into voluntary and involuntary turnover, between an individual leaving a job and joining another organization (Soelton, et al., 2020). Turnover intentionwas weighed with the help of an adapted three-item measure scale on the basis of Abdu (Abdou, Khalil, Mahmoud, Elsaied & Elsaed, 2022). These three items are as follows: (1) At present, I am surely considering resigning from my current employment in the resort; (2) Perhaps I will make an effort to find a new occupation within a year; (3) If I have a choice of choosing again, I will opt for working in another profession (Santhanam & Srinivas, 2019).

***Burnout and Turnover Intention***

Numerous studies showed that burnout has negative consequences both for individuals and organizations. For instance, turnover intention is a long standing issue in the field of human resource management, including high costs from turnover intentions (Tillman, Gonzalez, Crawford & Lawrence, 2018). High burnout as a risk factor represents situations where burnout has become so intense that it severely affects employees (Haar, 2021). More specifically, turnover intention represents a major outcome for organizations and employees but has been less frequently studied with burnout. Previous research showed positive relationships between employees' turnover intention and high burnout (Harder, Gouldthorpe & Goodwin, 2015).For instance, exhaustion could be found to positively associate with turnover intention. A study also found that emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment positively influence turnover intention (Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). By matching each of the burnout symptoms with the most thematic corresponding outcome, Swider and Zimmerman (2010) are able to best assess the validity of the association between burnout and turnover intention.

In the last decades, burnout has become an important concept in occupational health psychology and a matter of global concern owing to its considerable social and economic implications, mainly in terms of employees' turnover intentions. Burnout has long been considered as an appropriate factor for predicting turnover intention, which has been enjoying bulk of empirical support (Salama, Abdou, Mohamed & Shehata, 2022; Putra, Sudibyo, Safira, Pangaribuan & Hidayat, 2023, Deng, 2024). The core idea of the JD-R model is that high burnout produce high levels of subsequent impaired behavioural outcomes. More specifically, the researcher of this study examined the association between potential antecedents (i.e., burnout) and potential consequences (i.e., turnover intention). However, the New Burnout Assessment Tool offers a more robust approach to understand the relationships between burnout and turnover intentions (Schaufeli, et al., 2019; Schaufeli, et al., 2020a&b). Similarly, burnout symptoms have been positively associated with turnover intentions, with Sakakibara, et al. (2020) finding the four burnout symptoms to positively associated with turnover intentions among a large sample of Japanese workers. The result of their study on structural equation model showed that burnout symptoms were core predictors of turnover intentions. Similarly, Schaufeli, et al. (2020b) reported that burnout symptoms had a strong direct effect on turnover intentions, using a large sample of 1500 employees from the Netherlands. Apart from these two studies, the relationships between burnout symptoms and turnover intentions are limited. Within the context of the COR theory, burnout as a risk factor reflects a critically low level of resources. The fourth principle of the COR theory (that is, the desperation principle) is defined as, "when people's resources are outstretched or exhausted, they enter a defensive mode to preserve the self which is often defensive, aggressive, and may become irrational" (Hobfoll, et al., 2018; p. 106). Here, it is suggested that high burnout as a risk factor reflects the lowest levels of resources, and this should trigger the fourth principle of the COR theory and see employees flee their jobs.

The COR theory postulated by Hobfoll (2001) is used to understand why burnout risk represents a depleted state that ultimately predicts turnover intentions. Empirically, the study by de Beer (2021) showed that burnout largely correlated with turnover intention. The analysis of the study also showed that professional efficacy (a third dimension based on Maslach and Jackson's conceptualization of burnout) was found to be significantly and negatively correlated with turnover intention. As such, the consequences of burnout have become apparent over almost half a century of research inquiry, namely that burnout impaired affective commitment and increased turnover intention (Garcia, et al., 2019). Furthermore, high burnout has a large effect on both individuals or employees themselves (Glise, Wiegner & Jonsdottir, 2020) and the organizations, in terms of increased employee turnover intentions for midwives, resulting in a midwifery as an employee's shortage (Hunter & Warren, 2014).

In a study of 613 physical education high school teachers in 47 U.S. schools, Lee (2019) found that there is a relationship between burnout and turnover intention. Kim and Kao (2014) also find supportive relationships between burnout and reduced performance in the workplace often leading to several forms of withdrawal, ranging from absenteeism and intention to leave the organization. This research supports earlier studies that showed an association between burnout and various negative reactions including absenteeism, intention to leave the job, job dissatisfaction, job withdrawal, and turnover. Although there is a large body of literature establishing consequences of burnout, there is limited evidence for the proposed relationships in this study. The present study empirically tests the associated claims of consequences of burnout and helps fill the void in our understanding of the underlying processes of turnover intention. Following the literature review, the authors of this study, therefore, hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 1:* Exhaustion is a significant positive predictor of Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions.
*Hypothesis2:* Mental distance is a significant positive predictor of Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions.
*Hypothesis 3:* Cognitive disorder is a significant positive predictor of Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions.
*Hypothesis 4:* Emotional disorder is a significant positive predictor of Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions.
*Hypothesis 5:* Overall burnout is a significant positive predictor of Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions.

## Methods of Study

### *Research Design*

A quantitative research design was used to achieve the goal of the study. It involves the collection of data to determine the degree of relationship between two or more quantifiable variables. Therefore, this type of research design was used to determine the extent to which burnout predict Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions in Public Universities. The extent to which burnout with each core symptom predict turnover intentions were expressed as probability and correlation coefficient values.

### *Research Participants*

A total of 138 Vocational Business Educators from Public Universities in South-South participated in this present study. There are currently 13 Public Universities in the South-South Zone, out of which five are managed by the Federal Government and eight are managed by the State Government. The population distribution is shown in Table 1. The data concerning the population were obtained from the office of the HODs in the respective institutions (2025), except in the University of Port-Harcourt, where business education programme is housed by the Department of Educational Management.

**Table 1.**
Total Number of Participants for each University in South-South, Nigeria

| S/N | Federal Universities | Business Educators |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | University of Benin, Benin City: Edo State. | 12 |
| 2. | University of Calabar: Cross River State. | 22 |
| 3. | University of Port-Harcourt, Choba: Rivers State. | 07 |
| 4. | University of Uyo, Uyo: AkwaIbom State. | 14 |
| 5. | Federal University, Otuoke: Bayelsa State. | 04 |
| | **Total** | **59** |
| **S/N** | **State Universities** | **Business Educators** |
| 6 | Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma: Edo State. | 06 |
| 7. | Cross River State University of Technology: Cross River State. | 24 |
| 8. | Delta State University, Abraka: Delta State. | 11 |
| 9. | Edo University, Iyamho: Edo State. | 03 |
| 10. | University of Delta, Agbor: Delta State. | 08 |
| 11. | Ignatius Ajuru University of Education: Rivers State. | 10 |
| 12. | Niger Delta University: Bayelsa State. | 14 |
| 13. | Rivers State University of Science and Technology: Rivers | 11 |

| | |
|---|---|
| State. | |
| **Total** | **79** |
| **Grand Total** | **138** |

Source: Departmental Offices in Various Universities (2025), Except in the University of Port-Harcourt where Business Education Programme is housed in the Department of Educational Management.

***Sample and Sampling Procedure***

The total population sampling (TPS), also known as census sampling was used to select entire population of 138 Vocational Business Educators from the 13 Public Universities (Table 1) in South-South, Nigeria. As a type of purposive sampling technique, TPS is a non-probability sampling and involves studying entire population instead of a sample; and it is suitable when the population is small and homogenous (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

***Research Instrument***

The instruments for data collection were two structured questionnaires, adapted from previous existing psychological scales. The first instrument was titled: "Questionnaire on Vocational Business Educators Burnout" and the second instrument was titled: "Questionnaire on Vocational Business Educators Turnover Intentions". The first instrument comprised of 23 items in foursubscales. The second instrument comprised of five items. Vocational Business Educators ratedtheir experiences of burnout with eachcore symptomand turnover intentions on a 4-point scale, ranging from 4 = Always; 3 = Sometimes; 2 = Rarely; 1 = Never.

Burnout was measured by the English Version of Burnout Assessment Tool with 23 items developed by Schaufeliet al.(2019), covering the four subscales: exhaustion (8 items), mental distance (5 items), cognitive impairment (5 items), and emotional impairment (5 items).Sample items for exhaustion were "At work, I feel physically exhausted" and "At work, I feel physically exhausted". Sample items for mental distance were"At work, I don't really care what happens to people" and "I am cynical about what my job means to others". Sample items for cognitive disorderwere "At work, I have trouble staying focused" and "At work, I struggle to think clearly". Sample items for emotional disorderwere "At work, I may overreact unintentionally" and "At work, I feel unable to control my emotions". The instrument for measuring turnover intentions was adapted from the scale developed by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins and Klesh (1979).

***Validation and Reliability of the Instrument***

The instruments for data collection were subjected to face and content validity by three experts, two in Vocational Business Education and one in Measurement and Evaluation. The face and content validity was made with respect to relevance, sentence structure and adequacy. The suggestions made by these three experts were effected in the final copies of the instruments and were reproduced for data collection. To determine the internal consistencies of the items in the instrument, few copies were administered on 30 Vocational Business Educators who were not part of the sample. Thereafter, Cronbach's alpha was used to calculate the internal consistencies of the items in the instruments. The coefficients alphafor exhaustion was .831, mental distance was .747, cognitive disorder was .721, emotional disorder was .836, overall burnoutwas .932 and turnover intention was .741. The coefficients alpha for all the study variables was greater than 0.70, which implied adequate internal consistencies for all the items (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This assertion indicated that the instruments employed for data

collection in this present study are profoundly and exceptionally reliable and can be used in any study and setting to measure the same items, variables and constructs at anypoint in time.

***Data Collection and Analysis***

The instruments were distributed to participants, with the help of six research assistants who were briefed on the procedures to follow. The participants were contacted through letters before the instruments were administered on them using a direct contact mode. The participants were allowed to complete the instruments and were given the chance to return them in two weeks. Copies of the instruments on burnout with its symptoms and turnover intentions were administered on participants, since the instruments were considered self-report measurement scales.

The IBM-SPSS version 23.0 was used as the package for data analyses. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Spearman's rho Correlation and simple linear regression) were used as the tools for data analysis. Mean, standard deviation and Spearman's rho Correlation were employed to answer research questions, while simple linear regression was used to test research hypotheses.

Uzoagulu (2011) recommended that a decision rule for the use of PPMCC should bebased on a range of an r-value in the following order: an *r*-value between ± .8 and ± 1.0 should be consideredas very high correlation; an *r*-value between ± .6 and ± .8 should be consideredas high correlations; an *r*-value between ± .4 and ± .6 should be consideredas moderate correlation; an *r*-value between ± .2 and ± .4 should be consideredas low correlation; an *r*-value between ± .0 and ± .2 should be as considered very low correlations; an *r*-value of ± 1.0 should be consideredas perfect correlation; and an *r*-value of 0 should be consideredas no correlation. Note that when an *r*-value is negative, it should be consideredas negative correlation; which implied that as one variable increases the other decreases. In contrast, when an*r*-value is positive, it should be consideredas positive correlation; which implied that as one variable increases the other increases. For the use of simple linear regression, a *p*-value less than or equal to .05 should be considered as significant, while a*p*-value greater than .05 should be considered as not significant.

**Results**

***Descriptive Statistics (Answering Research Question)***

To examine the levels of burnout with each core symptom and turnover intentions,mean and standard deviation analyses were performed.

*Research Question 1:* What are the levels of burnout with each core symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) and Vocational Business Educators turnover intentions?

**Table 2.**

Mean and Standard Deviation of the Levels of Burnout with Each Core Symptomand Vocational Business Educators Turnover Intentions

| S/N | Variables | M | SD | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Exhaustion | 3.625 | 0.337 | Always |
| 2. | Mental Distance | 3.621 | 0.219 | Always |
| 3. | Cognitive Disorder | 3.605 | 0.356 | Always |
| 4. | Emotional Disorder | 3.676 | 0.363 | Always |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. | Overall Burnout | 3.470 | 0.299 | Always |
| 6. | Turnover Intentions | 3.561 | 0.381 | Always |

Note: *n*=138, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation.

Table 2 showed the Mean scores and Standard Deviationvalues of the study variables. The aggregated mean scores of the study variables ranged from 3.470 to 3.676, and standard deviation values ranged from 0.219 to 0.381. The Mean for overall burnout and each symptom indicated high scores and standard deviation values indicated that the responses of Vocational Business Educators are very close. Furthermore, the mean for turnover intentions indicated a high score and standard deviation values indicated that the responses of Vocational Business Educators are very close.

***Answering Research Question***

To examine the strengths of correlations between and among all the study variable(s), Spearman's rho correlation analysis was performed.

*Research Question 2:* To what extent does burnout with each symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) correlates with Vocational Business Educators turnover intentions?

**Table 3.**
Mean, Standard Deviation and Spearman's rho Correlation between and among the Study Variables

| S/N | Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Exhaustion | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | --- | | | | | |
| 2. | Mental Distance | .643** | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | --- | | | | |
| 3. | Cognitive Disorder | .807** | .538** | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | --- | | | |
| 4. | Emotional Disorder | .749** | .778** | .672** | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | --- | | |
| 5. | Overall Burnout | .925** | .829** | .838** | .894** | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | --- | |
| 6. | Turnover Intentions | .688** | .411** | .707** | .455** | .648** | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | --- |

Note: *N* = 138, **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), Sig. = Significant.

Table 3 indicated that all the correlation analyses performed were found to be positive, which were in line with the assumptions of theories and existing literature. For instance, the results indicated that the correlation between exhaustion and turnover intentions is highly positive ($r$ = .688, $p$ = .000). The results also indicated that the correlation between mental

distance and turnover intentions is moderately positive ($r$ = .411, $p$ = .000). The results also indicated that the correlation between cognitive disorder and turnover intentions is highly positive ($r$ = .707, $p$ = .000).The results also indicated that the correlation between emotional disorder and turnover intentions is moderately positive ($r$ = .455, $p$ = .000). The results also indicated that the correlation between overall burnout and turnover intentions is highly positive ($r$ = .648, $p$ = .000). By and large, burnout with each symptom was found to positively associate with Vocational Business Educators' turnover intention in Nigeria's Public Universities in South-South.

***Linear Regression Statistic (Testing Research Hypothesis)***

To examine the extent to which burnout with each symptom predicts turnover intentions, linear regression analysis was performed.

**Table 4.**
Linear Regression Analysis on the Relationships between Burnout with Each Symptom and Vocational Business Educators' Turnover Intentions

| 10000 Bootstrap Resamples | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | 95% CI | |
| Pathways | *SE (β)* | *t* | *Bias* | $R^2$ | *Adj.* $R^2$ | *P* | *LL* | *UL* |
| EXH → TI | .049 (.613) | 9.499 | .001 | .376 | .371 | .000 | .336 | .528 |
| MD → TI | .085 (.442) | 6.041 | -.002 | .196 | .190 | .000 | .304 | .639 |
| CD → TI | .078 (.664) | 10.874 | .001 | .441 | .437 | .000 | .554 | .862 |
| ED → TI | .087 (.504) | 7.153 | -.001 | .245 | .249 | .000 | .354 | .697 |
| OB → TI | .019 (.625) | 9.797 | -3.647 | .390 | .386 | .000 | .135 | .208 |

Note: $N$ = 138, a.) EXH = Exhaustion→ TI = Turnover Intentions ($F$=90.233), b.) MD = Mental Distance→ TI = Turnover Intentions ($F$=36.495, c.) CD = Cognitive Disorder→ TI = Turnover Intentions ($F$=118.242), d.) ED = Emotional Disorder → TI = Turnover Intentions ($F$=51.166), OB = Overall Burnout → TI = Turnover Intentions ($F$=95.973), CI = Confidence Interval, LL = Lower Limit, UL = Upper Limit.

Table 4 indicated that linear regression analyses for hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were performed to test whether burnout with each symptom might predicts Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions. Exhaustion was found to significantly predict Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions ($\beta$ = .613, $p$ < .001). The adjusted r-square also indicated that 37.1% of Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions where predicted by exhaustion. Mental distance was found to significantly predict Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions ($\beta$ = .442, $p$ < .001). The adjusted r-square also indicated that 19% of Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions where predicted by mental distance. Cognitive disorder was found to significantly predict Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions ($\beta$ = .664, $p$ < .001). The adjusted r-square also indicated that 43.7% of Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions where predicted by cognitive disorder. Emotional disorder was found to significantly predict Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions ($\beta$ = .504, $p$ < .001). The adjusted r-square also indicated that 24.9% of Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions where predicted by emotional disorder. Overall burnout was found to significantly predict Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions ($\beta$ = .625, $p$ < .001). The adjusted r-square also indicated that 38.6% of Vocational Business Educators'

turnover intentions where predicted by overall burnout.By and large, all the hypotheses proposed for the study was fully supported.

**Discussion**

Following the central aim of the study, the authors examined hypothesized relationships between burnout with each core symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) and Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions. By and large, through the application of mean and standard deviation statistics, the findings demonstrated support for the notion that Vocational Business Educators' to a very high extent suffer from burnout and experience turnover intentions. Through the application of Spearman's rho Correlation and linear regression statistics, the findings demonstrated support for the notion that burnout with each core symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) are significant positive predictors of Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions.

The first aim of this study was to examine the levels of the burnout with each symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) and Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions. The results of mean and standard deviation analyses showed that the levels of burnout with each symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) and Vocational Business Educators' turnover intention were very high. The result suggested that Vocational Business Educators currently suffer from burnout with each symptom and experience turnover intentions. The finding aligns with the study of Schaufeli et al. (2023) who found that employees from three European countries suffer from severe burnoutwith its symptoms. The finding also aligns with the study of De Beer et al. (2020) who found a high burnout-score for workers in Japan. The finding also aligns with the study of Hagqvist et al. (2022) who found that 4.7% of a representative Swedish physician sample suffered from severe burnout syndrome.The finding also aligns with the study of Haar (2021) who found that 17% of employees who are managers were at risk of burnout, compared to 8% of employees who are not managers.

The second aim of this study was to tests a conceptual model that incorporates the direct relationships between the burnout with each symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) and Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions. The results of the Spearman's rho Correlation and linear regression demonstrated that burnout with each symptom were significant positive predictors ofVocational Business Educators' turnover intentions, which supported the propositions ofthe JD-R and COR theories (e.g., Demerouti et al., 2001; Hobfoll et al., 2001, 2018) and existing literature (e.g.,Salama, Abdou, Mohamed & Shehata, 2022; Putra, Sudibyo, Safira, Pangaribuan & Hidayat, 2023, Deng, 2024).

**Limitations**

Every study must have some limitations. First, thedata was collected usingquantitative research approach and therefore causal relationships cannot be inferred. Therefore, the authors encourage future researchers to conduct longitudinal or experimental studies to improve existing knowledge and achieve better results. Second, because the sample was from a single programme (e.g., a Vocational Business Education) in South-South, Nigeria, results should not be generalized to other vocationally-oriented fields of study, and should be considered with great caution beyond this study. Future, higher educational studies should therefore be designed to include more representative samples, covering such as Vocational Agriculture, Vocational Home

Economics and Vocational Technical, etcetera) that would allow for a more balanced representation. The conceptual model is heavily informed by theories and existing literature, but as this is a quantitative study; it also needs to be tested longitudinally and experimentally.

**Implications**

Because the findings were supported by the JD-R and the COR theories, the findings have great implications for theory and practice. From a practical point of view, the findings have great relevance for policymakers because it has a number of practical applications for how they might handle the Vocational Business Educators suffering from severe burnout. First, by using the conceptual model as a guide, we can see a number of possible and important factors that could be used by university managers and administrators to Vocational Business Educators intentions to stay with their institution. By introducing institutional practices that are designed to reduce severe burnout and increase resources (e.g., support, feedback, autonomy, etcetera), for instance, vocational business educators might be assisted in their efforts to meet job stress and attain personal and professional goals. Importantly, these practices are not necessarily costly to the higher educational institution. For example, a Head of Department could easily be more supportive by making the Vocational Business Educator's workload more manageable and clarifying role-related expectations and providing timely and appropriate feedback and providing the chance for autonomy. In doing so, aVocational Business Educator would be less likely suffer from severe burnout, thus they would not exert cynical behaviour towards their job. Thus, in a practical sense, our findings showed that burnout with its core symptoms hadsignificant positive relationships with Vocational Business Educators turnover intentions due to the lack ofjob resources, presenting empirical evidence that revealed means to reduce burnout and turnover.

**Conclusion**

The goal of this present study was to examine the levels of burnout with each symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) and Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions. The goal of this present study was also to tests a conceptual model that incorporates the direct relationships between burnout with each symptom (i.e. exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive disorder and emotional disorder) and Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions. Even though Vocational Business Educators' were found to suffer from severe burnout and experience high turnover, this study still contributes to knowledge and existing literature as the study further showed that burnoutand its symptoms were found to be significant positive predictors of Vocational Business Educators' turnover intentions. Additional research still needs to be conducted so as to examine the relationships between ill-being and Vocational Business Educators' behavioural outcomes. More follow-up research should also be conducted so as to better understand the inconsistent results concerning the interplay betweenill-being and Vocational Business Educators' behavioural outcomes. As mental distance or cynical attitude/behaviour continues to increase in popularity, as an adaptive and a protective coping measure, more studies are required to understand the effect or role it might have on Vocational Business Educators' behaviours.

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**Appendix**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON BURNOUT AND VOCATIONAL BUSINESS EDUCATORS' TURNOVER INTENTIONS**

Please you are requested to respond to the items of the questionnaire objectively. It is meant to collect data on *"Burnout and Vocational Business Educators' Turnover Intentions"*. Note that your response to the following items is strictly confidential and will not be published for any selfish or reproachful motive.

Development of Research Questions

Instruction: *Please Tick [√] the column that best express your opinion using the following rating scales: 4 = Always; 3 = Sometimes; 2 = Rarely; 1 = Never.*

| | Work Burnout Scale | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your experiences of exhaustion | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1. | At work, I feel mentally exhausted. | | | | |
| 2. | Everything I do at work requires a great deal of effort. | | | | |
| 3. | After a day at work, I find it hard to recover my energy. | | | | |
| 4. | At work, I feel physically exhausted. | | | | |
| 5. | When I get up in the morning, I lack the energy to start a new day at work. | | | | |
| 6. | I want to be active at work, but somehow I am unable to manage. | | | | |
| 7. | When I exert myself at work, I quickly get tired. | | | | |
| 8. | At the end of my working day, I feel mentally exhausted and drained. | | | | |
| | Instruction: To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your experiences of mental distance. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. | I struggle to find anything enthusiasm for my work. | | | | |
| 10. | At work, I do not think much about what I am doing and I function on autopilot. | | | | |
| 11. | I feel a strong aversion towards my job. | | | | |
| 12. | I feel indifferent about my job. | | | | |
| 13 | I am cynical about what my job means to others. | | | | |

| . | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your experiences of cognitive disorder | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 14. | At work, I have trouble staying focused. | | | | |
| 15. | At work, I struggle to think clearly. | | | | |
| 16. | I am forgetful and distracted at work. | | | | |
| 17. | When I am working, I have trouble concentrating. | | | | |
| 18. | At work, I have trouble staying focused. | | | | |
| | To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your experiences of emotional disorder | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19. | At work, I feel unable to control my emotions. | | | | |
| 20. | I do not recognize myself in the way I react emotionally at work. | | | | |
| 21. | During my work, I become irritable when things do not go my way. | | | | |
| 22. | I get upset or sad at work without knowing why. | | | | |
| 23. | At work, I may overreact unintentionally. | | | | |
| *Adapted from Schaufeli, De Witte and Desart (2019).* | | | | | |
| Turnover Intentions Scale | | | | | |
| | To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your experiences of the intentions to quit your job | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 24. | I like to actively look for a new job. | | | | |
| 25. | As soon as I get another acceptable job, I will quit. | | | | |
| 26. | I often think about quitting my current job. | | | | |
| 27. | I will probably look for a new job any moment from now. | | | | |
| 28. | I think about quitting my job all the time. | | | | |
| *Adapted from Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins and Klesh (1979).* | | | | | |

Thank you for contributing to this study on the influence of job demands and burnout on business educators' intentions to quit their jobs in public universities in South-South Nigeria.