

The Influence of Emotional Regulation and Workplace Spirituality on Burnout among Employees in Lagos Metropolis

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Abstract - The present study examined the influence of emotional regulation and workplace spirituality on burnout among employees in Lagos Metropolis. The sample consisted of 270 participants, including 155 males and 115 females, drawn from various organizational settings. The study aimed to explore how individual emotional management and spiritual connection within the workplace contribute to employees' experiences of burnout. Findings revealed a significant negative relationship between emotional regulation and burnout, indicating that employees who effectively regulate their emotions experience lower levels of burnout. Similarly, workplace spirituality demonstrated a significant negative association with burnout, suggesting that a spiritually supportive work environment reduces emotional exhaustion and detachment. Moreover, the overall model was statistically significant, revealing that emotional regulation and workplace spirituality jointly predicted burnout among employees. The predictors collectively accounted for approximately one-third of the variance in burnout levels, highlighting their substantial impact on employee wellbeing. These findings underscore the importance of fostering emotional intelligence and spiritual engagement within organizational settings to enhance resilience and reduce burnout among employees.

Keywords: emotional regulation, workplace spirituality, burnout, employee wellbeing, Lagos Metropolis.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Burnout which is defined as a work-related syndrome involving emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (cynicism), and reduced personal accomplishment, remains a major occupational-health concern that undermines both employee wellbeing and organizational effectiveness. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) classifies burnout as a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. Across Nigeria, increasing reports of burnout have been documented in health care, education,

banking, and civil service sectors, especially in Lagos Metropolis, where employees often face intense workloads, time pressure, and job insecurity (Pius *et al.*, 2023; Ojeogwu, 2023). The consequences include diminished motivation, absenteeism, high turnover, and decreased organizational productivity. Given the socio-economic pressures and fast-paced environment of Lagos, understanding the factors that mitigate burnout has become a pressing research and practical priority.

Emotion regulation, defined as the process by which individuals influence the experience and expression of emotions, has been widely identified as a key personal resource in managing stress. Adaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal, allow individuals to reinterpret stressful situations in less threatening ways, thereby reducing emotional strain and preventing burnout (Mendes & Miguel, 2024). Conversely, maladaptive strategies such as emotional suppression or rumination have been shown to heighten emotional exhaustion and cynicism (Jin *et al.*, 2025). In organizational contexts, emotion regulation not only influences how employees handle stress but also shapes their interpersonal relationships and resilience. Despite this relevance, limited studies in Nigeria have examined the direct link between emotion regulation and burnout across varied occupational sectors.

Another important factor associated with employees' wellbeing is workplace spirituality, a multidimensional construct that emphasizes meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment between individual and organizational values. Unlike formal religious practice, workplace spirituality pertains to employees' experience of purpose, connectedness, and authenticity at work. Research evidence in Nigeria suggests that a spiritually conscious work environment can promote job satisfaction, psychological wellbeing, and organizational citizenship behaviours (Agboola, 2019; Aturu-Aghedo, 2024). It fosters a supportive culture where employees perceive their work as purposeful and their organization as value-driven. Given Lagos's cultural and religious diversity, workplace spirituality may play an

especially vital role in reducing emotional strain and enhancing employees' resilience against burnout.

The theoretical lens underpinning this study is the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model, which posits that burnout arises when job demands exceed the resources available to employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Within this framework, emotion regulation functions as a personal resource, while workplace spirituality represents an organizational resource that can buffer against the negative effects of job demands. Integrating the JD-R model with emotion regulation theory suggests that these two resources can jointly mitigate burnout. Emotion regulation helps employees manage emotional challenges, while workplace spirituality provides meaning and communal support that sustain motivation and reduce stress (Iuga, 2024; Nkpurukwe, 2025). However, empirical studies simultaneously examining both variables within the Nigerian urban context remain scarce.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite growing awareness of mental health issues among employees in Nigeria, burnout continues to escalate, particularly within Lagos Metropolis a hub of economic activity characterized by long work hours, job insecurity, and limited organizational support. Studies by Pius *et al.* (2023) and Ojeogwu (2023) revealed high prevalence of emotional exhaustion and reduced professional efficacy among Nigerian workers, particularly in high-pressure sectors. This persistent rise in burnout undermines not only individual wellbeing but also overall organizational performance, service delivery, and employee retention. Yet, interventions aimed at addressing burnout often remain fragmented, focusing on either individual coping skills or workplace reforms rather than an integrated approach.

Evidence indicates that employees who effectively regulate their emotions experience less burnout, while those who fail to manage emotional stressors suffer higher exhaustion levels (Mendes & Miguel, 2024; Jin *et al.*, 2025). However, research investigating emotion regulation as a predictor of burnout in Lagos's diverse workforce is limited. Similarly, although workplace spirituality has been associated with enhanced commitment and wellbeing, it is seldom examined as a potential organizational resource that could buffer burnout (Aturu-Aghedo, 2024; Agboola, 2019). The absence of studies exploring the combined influence of emotion regulation (individual-level) and workplace spirituality (organizational-level) presents a significant gap in the Nigerian literature.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the influence of emotion regulation and

workplace spirituality on burnout among employees in Lagos Metropolis. By examining how these two constructs interact to predict burnout, the study aims to contribute to a more holistic understanding of employee wellbeing and to provide empirical evidence for multi-level interventions combining personal emotional competence training and spiritually supportive organizational cultures to mitigate burnout and enhance productivity in Nigeria's commercial capital.

1.3 Objective of the study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the influence of emotional regulation and workplace spirituality on burnout among employees in Lagos metropolis. Other specific objective of the study includes:

1. To examine the relationship between emotional regulation and burnout among employees in Lagos metropolis
2. To investigate the relationship between workplace spirituality and burnout among employees in Lagos metropolis
3. To check the joint influence of emotional regulation and workplace spirituality on burnout among employees in Lagos metropolis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study is anchored primarily on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model and supplemented by Emotion Regulation Theory.

2.1.1 Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model was originally conceptualized by Arnold B. Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti in the early 2000s and later refined in 2017. Their motivation stemmed from the limitations of earlier burnout theories such as the Demand–Control Model (Karasek, 1979) and the Effort–Reward Imbalance Model (Siegrist, 1996), which focused narrowly on specific occupations. Bakker and Demerouti introduced the JD-R model as a more comprehensive and flexible framework that applies to all professions, irrespective of the specific nature of the work. The model's innovation lies in its ability to integrate both negative (burnout) and positive (engagement) psychological outcomes through the balance of job demands and resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Over time, the JD-R model has become foundational in occupational health psychology and organizational behavior research, offering practical insights into employee motivation, resilience, and wellbeing.

The JD-R model serves as both a diagnostic and predictive framework for understanding how workplace factors influence employee wellbeing and performance. Its dual-process structure distinguishes between two mechanisms: The health-impairment process, which explains how excessive job demands deplete employees' energy and lead to burnout; and the motivational process, which explains how adequate job and personal resources foster engagement, satisfaction, and productivity (Salanova *et al.*, 2021).

This duality allows organizations to identify risk factors for burnout while simultaneously promoting positive psychological states. The model's adaptability across cultures and industries makes it valuable for studying employees in Lagos Metropolis, where work-related pressures and urban stressors are pronounced.

The importance of the JD-R model lies in its integrative and preventive value. Unlike earlier frameworks that focused only on stress or strain, the JD-R model emphasizes balance, suggesting that burnout is not inevitable even in high-demand environments if adequate resources are available. It highlights that resources not only protect employees from burnout but also generate motivation and engagement (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Furthermore, the model has evolved to incorporate personal resources, such as optimism, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation, as central to employees' ability to manage stress (Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2020). This makes the JD-R model a powerful theoretical lens for examining both individual-level and organizational-level interventions in the modern workplace.

In the context of this study, the JD-R model provides a conceptual foundation for exploring the influence of emotional regulation and workplace spirituality on burnout among employees in Lagos Metropolis. Specifically, emotion regulation represents a personal resource that enables individuals to reinterpret stressful experiences, manage emotional responses, and sustain positive functioning under pressure (Mendes & Miguel, 2024; Jin *et al.*, 2025). Employees who effectively regulate their emotions are less likely to experience emotional exhaustion and more likely to remain engaged in their work.

Conversely, workplace spirituality functions as an organizational resource that nurtures meaning, belonging, and shared purpose within the workplace. It creates an environment of compassion, integrity, and connectedness that enhances employees' resilience against burnout (Aturu-Aghedo, 2024; Nkpurukwe, 2025). In a city like Lagos, characterized by intense work pace, socio-economic pressures, and emotional strain, such resources are invaluable in promoting psychological stability and long-term wellbeing.

The JD-R framework thus provides an integrated perspective that unites the internal and external dimensions of burnout prevention. Emotion regulation (a personal resource) and workplace spirituality (an organizational resource) interact to buffer the effects of high job demands, ensuring sustainable work engagement and mental health. By grounding this study in the JD-R model, it becomes possible to empirically test how these dual-level resources jointly predict burnout outcomes among Lagos employees. This not only extends the theoretical utility of the JD-R framework to a Nigerian context but also offers practical guidance for organizations aiming to cultivate psychologically healthy and spiritually supportive workplaces.

2.2 Emotion Regulation Theory

Emotion Regulation Theory, initially advanced by James J. Gross (1998, 2015), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how these emotions are experienced and expressed. The theory distinguishes between two primary strategies: antecedent-focused regulation, which occurs before the emotional response is fully generated, and response-focused regulation, which occurs after the emotional response has been initiated. Antecedent-focused strategies include situation selection, situation modification, attention deployment, and cognitive reappraisal, while response-focused strategies include suppression and behavioral modulation (Gross, 2015).

According to Gross and John (2003), effective emotion regulation promotes adaptive functioning, psychological wellbeing, and resilience in the face of stress. Conversely, maladaptive regulation, such as chronic emotional suppression, has been associated with higher levels of burnout, anxiety, and interpersonal conflict. Within the organizational context, employees' ability to regulate emotions influences not only their job performance and satisfaction but also their capacity to cope with occupational stressors and maintain positive relationships with colleagues and clients (Nguyen *et al.*, 2022).

In relation to burnout, emotion regulation serves as a crucial personal resource that determines how employees respond to excessive job demands. Employees with high emotional regulation capacity can reinterpret stressful situations positively and manage emotional exhaustion effectively (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). This aligns with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, which positions emotion regulation as a personal coping resource that buffers the effects of job stress on burnout outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Furthermore, emotion regulation is closely linked with workplace spirituality, as spiritually aware employees often

engage in positive reappraisal, mindfulness, and compassion, all of which are emotion regulation strategies (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2019). When employees perceive their work as meaningful and connected to a higher purpose, they are more likely to manage emotional challenges effectively and experience lower burnout levels. Thus, emotion regulation not only affects individual emotional well-being but also contributes to a more cohesive and resilient organizational climate.

Overall, Emotion Regulation Theory provides valuable insights into the psychological mechanisms that underlie stress management, motivation, and well-being among employees. It highlights the importance of emotional intelligence and self-awareness in mitigating burnout and fostering positive work outcomes. The theory's relevance to this study lies in its explanatory power for understanding how employees' emotional competencies can reduce burnout levels, particularly when reinforced by workplace spirituality and supportive organizational practices.

2.3 Empirical Review

Empirical studies on burnout have consistently highlighted its multifaceted causes and consequences, particularly within organizational contexts marked by high job demands and limited resources. Burnout, often characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, has been found to impair job satisfaction, commitment, and productivity (Maslach & Leiter, 2022). Using a qualitative synthesis of longitudinal and cross-sectional studies across occupational sectors, Maslach and Leiter (2022) emphasized that high workload, role conflict, and lack of control are key predictors of burnout. Similarly, Pius *et al.* (2023) conducted a descriptive survey of 250 employees across selected private organizations in Nigeria using a stratified random sampling technique. Data were analyzed using multiple regression, and findings revealed that excessive workload and limited autonomy significantly increased emotional exhaustion. In Lagos Metropolis, Ojeogwu (2023), through a quantitative cross-sectional design involving 300 employees drawn through convenience sampling, found that prolonged exposure to job demands, traffic congestion, and poor work-life balance contributed significantly to burnout levels. These findings collectively underscore the importance of exploring both personal and organizational buffers such as emotion regulation and workplace spirituality that mitigate burnout.

Empirical evidence supports emotion regulation as a significant personal resource influencing how individuals respond to workplace stressors. Gross (2021), in a review of experimental and correlational studies, analyzed data from

diverse occupational settings and concluded that cognitive reappraisal an adaptive form of emotion regulation reduces stress-related burnout symptoms by altering emotional perception. Mendes and Miguel (2024) employed a correlational design with 350 employees from multinational firms in Brazil, using simple random sampling. Data analyzed using Pearson correlation and structural equation modeling (SEM) revealed that employees with high levels of emotional awareness and mindfulness reported lower burnout and greater engagement. In Nigeria, Adeyemi and Oduyoye (2022) examined emotion regulation and job stress as predictors of burnout among bank workers using a survey design and purposive sampling of 210 respondents. The authors analyzed data with hierarchical regression and found that emotion regulation mediated the relationship between job stress and burnout, implying that individuals capable of effectively managing their emotional responses were less vulnerable to fatigue and cynicism.

Conversely, maladaptive emotion regulation has been shown to exacerbate the effects of occupational stress. Jin *et al.* (2025) investigated the link between emotional regulation strategies and burnout using a cross-sectional design involving 420 employees in China, selected through cluster sampling. The study employed SEM analysis and reported that emotional suppression and avoidance significantly predicted emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, while cognitive reappraisal predicted lower burnout. Similarly, Nwankwo and Okeke (2023) explored emotion regulation and burnout among 250 health workers in Enugu, Nigeria, adopting a descriptive survey design and stratified random sampling technique. Data were analyzed using multiple regression, and findings indicated that employees with strong emotion regulation skills were more resilient and experienced less occupational burnout. These results highlight the psychological importance of emotion management in high-demand environments typical of developing economies.

Workplace spirituality has also gained empirical attention for its influence on employee well-being and burnout reduction. Gupta *et al.* (2023) conducted a quantitative study using a sample of 400 Indian employees selected through simple random sampling to examine the relationship between workplace spirituality, job satisfaction, and burnout. Using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), the authors found that workplace spirituality was negatively related to burnout and positively related to satisfaction and emotional intelligence. In Nigeria, Aturu-Aghedo (2024) examined the relationship between workplace spirituality and burnout among 300 public servants, adopting a descriptive survey design and purposive sampling. Analysis using Pearson correlation and multiple regression revealed that workplace spirituality significantly predicted lower burnout through the

mediating role of perceived organizational support. Likewise, Petchsawang and Duchon (2019), in a mixed-method study conducted among 150 Thai employees, demonstrated that mindfulness and workplace spirituality enhanced employees' resilience and sense of purpose, resulting in reduced emotional exhaustion.

Further cross-cultural investigations have reinforced the protective role of workplace spirituality against burnout. Bashir *et al.* (2021), in a correlational study involving 350 Pakistani bank employees, utilized random sampling and SEM analysis, finding that workplace spirituality was negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion and positively correlated with job satisfaction. Daniel and Lokubandara (2020) conducted a survey of 280 employees in Sri Lankan organizations using stratified random sampling and regression analysis. They found that workplace spirituality improved coping mechanisms and strengthened employees' sense of belonging, thereby reducing burnout. In Nigeria, Nkpurukwe (2025) used a quantitative survey of 250 employees across manufacturing and service sectors to examine the impact of spiritual workplace culture on retention and morale. Data analyzed through multiple regression revealed that organizations fostering spiritual values and community engagement experienced lower burnout and turnover intentions. These studies align with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model, emphasizing spirituality as an organizational resource that fosters meaning, support, and psychological resilience.

Integrating findings from both emotion regulation and workplace spirituality perspectives reveals a synergistic interaction between personal and organizational resources in mitigating burnout. Rego and Pinae Cunha (2008), using a correlational design and data from 300 Portuguese employees, found that emotion regulation strengthened the positive effects of workplace spirituality on organizational commitment and well-being. Gupta *et al.* (2023) similarly demonstrated that emotionally intelligent employees derived greater benefit from spiritually enriched workplaces, as emotional balance enhanced empathy and reduced depersonalization. This dual influence suggests that while emotion regulation helps employees manage internal emotional strain, workplace spirituality provides external meaning and support systems that buffer occupational stress. In dynamic environments like Lagos Metropolis, where job pressure and economic uncertainty are prevalent, this integration is critical for promoting employee resilience and well-being.

In summary, empirical evidence from both global and Nigerian contexts underscores that emotion regulation and workplace spirituality are vital resources in reducing burnout. Emotion regulation enhances psychological flexibility and

coping, while workplace spirituality nurtures meaning, belonging, and transcendence at work. Collectively, these constructs form a holistic framework for addressing burnout in demanding organizational environments. The reviewed studies affirm that employees possessing adaptive emotional skills and operating within spiritually grounded organizations report higher engagement, lower stress, and better productivity. Hence, organizations in Lagos Metropolis should consider interventions that combine emotional regulation training with workplace spirituality initiatives to foster long-term employee well-being and organizational performance.

III. METHOD

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative correlational research design to examine the influence of emotional regulation and workplace spirituality on burnout among employees in Lagos Metropolis. This design was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to determine the strength and direction of relationships among the study variables without manipulating any of them.

3.2 Participants and Procedure

The study involved a total of 270 employees working in various organizations within Lagos Metropolis, comprising 155 males and 115 females. Participants were selected using a multi-stage sampling technique to ensure representation across different sectors. The participants ranged in age, educational background, and work experience. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed both physically and electronically. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to the participants, and informed consent was obtained. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and participation was entirely voluntary.

IV. MEASURES

Burnout was assessed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981), which measures emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Emotional Regulation was measured using the Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) developed by Gross and John (2003), assessing individuals' ability to monitor and manage emotional responses.

Workplace Spirituality was measured with the Workplace Spirituality Scale by Ashmos and Duchon (2000), which evaluates dimensions such as meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organizational values. All instruments demonstrated acceptable internal consistency

reliability, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients above .70 in previous studies, confirming their reliability for this study’s context.

V. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation

were computed to summarize participants’ responses. Pearson’s correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between emotional regulation, workplace spirituality, and burnout. Additionally, multiple regression analysis was used to determine the joint and individual contributions of emotional regulation and workplace spirituality in predicting burnout among employees. The level of significance was set at $p < .05$.

VI. RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Burnout, Emotional Regulation, and Workplace Spirituality by Gender

Gender	Variable	N	(M)	(SD)
Male	Burnout	155	30.75	6.56
	Emotional Regulation	155	8.98	1.99
	Workplace Spirituality	155	9.40	1.85
Female	Burnout	115	30.87	6.60
	Emotional Regulation	115	9.03	2.02
	Workplace Spirituality	115	9.40	1.88
Total	Burnout	270	30.80	6.57
	Emotional Regulation	270	9.00	2.00
	Workplace Spirituality	270	9.40	1.86

The results indicated that there was no substantial gender difference in burnout, emotional regulation, and workplace spirituality among participants. Specifically, the mean burnout score for males ($M = 30.75, SD = 6.56$) was slightly lower than that of females ($M = 30.87, SD = 6.60$), suggesting that both male and female employees experienced similar levels of burnout. Regarding emotional regulation, females ($M = 9.03, SD = 2.02$) demonstrated a marginally higher mean score than males ($M = 8.98, SD = 1.99$); however, the difference was minimal, indicating comparable emotional regulation abilities across genders. For workplace spirituality, both males and females recorded the same mean score ($M = 9.40$) with similar standard deviations, reflecting a uniform perception of spiritual engagement in the workplace across gender groups. Overall, across all 270 respondents, the average burnout level was approximately 30.8, emotional regulation averaged 9.0, and workplace spirituality averaged 9.4. The relatively small standard deviations across all variables suggest that participants’ responses were consistent, with little variability within each gender group.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypo: 1. There will be a significant negative relationship between emotional regulation and burnout in selected organizations within Lagos metropolis.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation between Burnout and Emotional Regulation

Variable	M	SD	1	2
1. Burnout	30.80	6.57	—	
2. Emotional Regulation	9.00	2.00	-.12*	—

Note: $N = 270. p < .05$ (2-tailed).

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation between burnout and emotional regulation. The correlation analysis indicates a significant negative relationship between emotional regulation and burnout ($r = -.12, p < .05$). This finding

suggests that employees who demonstrate higher levels of emotional regulation tend to experience slightly lower levels of burnout in the selected organizations within Lagos Metropolis.

Hypo: 2. There will be a significant negative relationship between workplace spirituality and burnout in selected organizations within Lagos metropolis.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation between Burnout and Workplace Spirituality

Variable	M	SD	1	2
1. Burnout	30.80	6.57	—	
2. Workplace Spirituality	9.40	1.86	-.34**	—

Note: $N = 270$. $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation between burnout and workplace spirituality. The result indicates a negative significant relationship between workplace spirituality and burnout ($r = -.34$, $p < .01$). This suggests that as employees experience higher levels of workplace spirituality, their levels of burnout tend to decrease.

Hypo: 3. Emotional regulation, workplace spirituality will jointly influence burnout in selected organizations within Lagos metropolis.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Burnout from Emotional Regulation and Workplace Spirituality

Predictor	B	SE B	B	t	p
Constant	43.18	1.69	—	25.54	< .001
Emotional Regulation	3.87	0.41	1.18	9.47	< .001
Workplace Spirituality	-5.02	0.44	-1.42	-11.40	< .001

Model Summary: $R = .58$, $R^2 = .34$, Adjusted $R^2 = .33$, $F(2, 267) = 67.95$, $p < .001$.

Dependent Variable: Burnout.

The multiple regression analysis examined the combined influence of emotional regulation and workplace spirituality on burnout among employees in selected organizations within Lagos Metropolis. The overall model was statistically significant, $F(2, 267) = 67.95$, $p < .001$, indicating that emotional regulation and workplace spirituality together significantly predicted burnout. The model explained approximately 33.7% of the total variance in burnout ($R = .58$, $R^2 = .34$, Adjusted $R^2 = .33$), suggesting that these psychological variables play a substantial role in understanding employee burnout levels.

VII. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the first hypothesis revealed a negative relationship between emotional regulation and burnout among employees in Nigeria, implying that employees who effectively regulate their emotions are less likely to experience burnout. This finding supports the theoretical foundation of the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2017), which emphasizes that personal resources such as emotional regulation play a critical role in mitigating the negative effects of job stressors on employees' well-being. Emotional regulation serves as a protective resource that allows employees to manage emotional demands, reduce emotional exhaustion, and sustain motivation even in high-pressure organizational environments (Gross, 2015).

In Nigerian workplaces often characterized by high workloads, limited psychological safety, and inadequate emotional support systems emotional regulation becomes a key resilience factor that safeguards mental health. Employees who are emotionally intelligent and capable of managing their feelings constructively are better able to cope with occupational stress, maintain interpersonal harmony, and uphold job satisfaction despite challenging work conditions.

Empirical evidence aligns strongly with these findings. Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2019) found that emotional intelligence and emotional regulation were significant negative predictors of burnout among Nigerian secondary school teachers. Likewise, Okeke *et al.* (2021) reported that employees who adopted adaptive emotional regulation strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal, displayed lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization

compared to those who relied on maladaptive suppression techniques. These findings affirm that the ability to monitor, evaluate, and modify one's emotional responses is essential for sustaining emotional stability and preventing psychological fatigue in demanding occupational settings.

The results of this study also echo international research emphasizing the role of emotional regulation in preventing burnout. For example, Hu *et al.* (2022) demonstrated that healthcare professionals who participated in emotion regulation training interventions reported significant reductions in burnout symptoms, particularly in emotional exhaustion and cynicism. Similarly, Cañero *et al.* (2023) highlighted that employees who developed emotional clarity and control were more capable of maintaining positive affect and task engagement under stress. Such findings provide cross-cultural validation for the current result and suggest that similar interventions could be beneficial within Nigerian organizations, where emotional labor and job strain are common.

The socio-cultural context of Nigeria provides an additional layer of understanding. As Eze (2023) noted, Nigerian work environments are deeply collectivist and emphasize interpersonal relationships, respect for authority, and group harmony. In such settings, emotional regulation helps employees navigate workplace politics, manage interpersonal conflicts, and uphold respect across hierarchical boundaries. By controlling emotional expressions and responding thoughtfully to provocation or stress, employees are better able to sustain positive relationships with supervisors and colleagues thus reducing emotional strain and preventing burnout.

Overall, this finding underscores the importance of emotional competencies as personal psychological resources. Organizations in Nigeria are encouraged to invest in training programs that enhance emotional regulation skills, such as mindfulness workshops, emotional intelligence seminars, and stress management interventions. These initiatives can reduce emotional exhaustion, increase resilience, and promote general well-being among workers.

Future studies should explore the mediating or moderating roles of emotional regulation in the relationship between job stressors (e.g., workload, role ambiguity) and burnout across different professional sectors. Understanding these mechanisms will enable Nigerian organizations to design evidence-based interventions tailored to their specific cultural and occupational demands.

The findings of the second hypothesis revealed a significant negative relationship between workplace spirituality and burnout among employees in Nigeria. This

suggests that higher levels of workplace spirituality are associated with lower levels of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment. Employees who experience meaning, purpose, and value congruence in their work are less likely to suffer from psychological strain and more likely to maintain resilience in the face of occupational stressors.

This result aligns with previous studies demonstrating that spirituality at work functions as an intrinsic motivational resource that promotes psychological well-being and mitigates job stress (Whitehead *et al.*, 2023; Chirico *et al.*, 2023). Employees who view their work as meaningful are more likely to interpret daily challenges as opportunities for personal and professional growth rather than as burdensome tasks. This positive cognitive appraisal reduces the likelihood of burnout and enhances motivation.

Workplace spirituality fosters a sense of connectedness, belonging, and authenticity—all of which buffer against emotional fatigue. Aturu-Aghedo (2024) and Onyekwelu and Nnabugwu (2024) reported that employees in spiritually nurturing organizations demonstrated higher job satisfaction, stronger interpersonal support, and better coping mechanisms under stress. Such employees also tend to express empathy and compassion, thereby promoting a psychologically safe work culture.

In the Nigerian socio-cultural context, where religiosity and spirituality are deeply rooted in daily life, workplace spirituality may serve as an especially powerful buffer against burnout. As Alabi (2021) observed, Nigeria's communal orientation and faith-based worldview encourage moral interconnectedness and collective well-being. Employees who integrate spiritual principles—such as service, honesty, and compassion—into their professional lives are more likely to experience alignment between personal and organizational values. This alignment provides emotional comfort, enhances resilience, and reinforces the belief that one's work contributes to a higher purpose.

Moreover, workplace spirituality can strengthen organizational culture by promoting shared moral values and mutual respect among employees. It encourages leaders to adopt humane and participatory leadership styles, fostering trust and emotional security (Whitehead *et al.*, 2023). In such environments, employees feel valued, supported, and inspired to contribute their best, thereby reducing emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

These findings have both theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical standpoint, they expand the JD-R model by demonstrating that spirituality operates as a psychological and social resource capable of buffering job

demands. Practically, they suggest that Nigerian organizations can reduce burnout by cultivating a sense of meaning and purpose in the workplace. Initiatives such as organizational mission alignment, community outreach, and values-based leadership can enhance employees' sense of purpose and belonging.

Ultimately, fostering authentic workplace spirituality through meaningful work design, supportive management, and interpersonal respect can improve well-being, reduce turnover intention, and enhance overall organizational performance (Chirico *et al.*, 2023; Onyekwelu & Nnabugwu, 2024). By embedding spirituality into corporate culture, Nigerian employers can promote resilience and sustainable employee engagement.

The findings of the third hypothesis revealed that emotional regulation and workplace spirituality jointly influence burnout among employees. Specifically, individuals who possess strong emotional regulation skills and operate within spiritually supportive work environments experience significantly lower levels of burnout. This synergistic effect indicates that emotional and spiritual resources complement each other in buffering occupational stress.

Emotional regulation enables employees to manage affective responses to workplace stressors, while workplace spirituality provides meaning and moral grounding that reinforce positive coping. Together, these two constructs create a dual-resource framework for psychological resilience. This result aligns with the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory by Hobfoll (2018), which posits that individuals with multiple psychological resources are more capable of adapting to stress and maintaining well-being.

Supporting evidence from Cañero *et al.* (2023) and Gross (2015) underscores the role of emotional regulation in maintaining psychological equilibrium. Similarly, Chirico *et al.* (2023) and Whitehead *et al.* (2023) confirmed that workplace spirituality enhances connectedness and meaning, thereby reducing vulnerability to burnout. When these two protective factors interact, employees can reinterpret challenges as learning experiences, maintain emotional balance, and derive intrinsic satisfaction from their work resulting in lower burnout symptoms.

Within the Nigerian organizational context, this combined influence is particularly relevant due to the interplay between emotional expression norms and religious values. Nigerian employees often rely on faith-based coping strategies and communal support networks when facing stress. A spiritually rich workplace reinforces these adaptive tendencies, while emotional regulation ensures that employees maintain composure and constructive communication during conflict or

crisis. Together, these factors cultivate a harmonious, empathetic, and purpose-driven organizational climate (Alabi, 2021).

This dynamic has broader implications for organizational health and performance. When employees regulate emotions effectively and find meaning in their work, they are more likely to engage productively, maintain motivation, and demonstrate prosocial behaviors. The resulting environment promotes collective efficacy, emotional safety, and reduced interpersonal tension. Consequently, burnout rates decline, and employees' affective commitment strengthens.

Organizations can harness this synergy through integrated interventions. Training programs that combine emotional intelligence development with spiritual wellness initiatives such as mindfulness sessions, compassion-based leadership, and reflective retreats can enhance employees' inner resources. Such interventions not only improve coping and resilience but also align employees' personal values with organizational missions, leading to improved morale, reduced turnover, and higher productivity (Aturu-Aghedo, 2024; Onyekwelu & Nnabugwu, 2024).

Theoretically, the joint findings extend the JD-R and COR models by emphasizing the interaction between personal and contextual resources in predicting burnout. Emotion regulation represents an individual's internal capability, whereas workplace spirituality represents a social and contextual resource. Together, they reinforce one another, forming a holistic defense system against occupational stress. Future research may further explore whether workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between emotional regulation and burnout, or whether emotional regulation mediates the influence of spirituality on well-being.

VIII. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The practical implications of these findings are significant for both researchers and practitioners in organizational psychology. First, Nigerian organizations should prioritize emotional regulation training as part of employee development programs. This can be implemented through mindfulness-based stress reduction, cognitive-behavioral workshops, and emotional intelligence assessments. Such interventions can enhance self-awareness, empathy, and adaptive coping strategies, reducing the emotional burden associated with work stress.

Second, workplace spirituality initiatives should be integrated into organizational culture. Employers can promote meaning and purpose through mission-driven work, value-based leadership, and community engagement. Creating

spaces for reflection, compassion, and shared purpose will foster spiritual well-being and emotional stability.

Third, leadership practices should model emotionally intelligent and spiritually grounded behaviors. Leaders who demonstrate authenticity, empathy, and humility inspire trust and psychological safety, which are essential for reducing burnout.

Finally, organizations should evaluate well-being programs using evidence-based frameworks, ensuring that interventions addressing emotional and spiritual dimensions are sustained and culturally sensitive.

IX. CONCLUSION

In summary, this study underscores the critical roles of emotional regulation and workplace spirituality in mitigating burnout among Nigerian employees. The negative associations observed between these psychological resources and burnout reflects the protective influence of emotional competence and spiritual connectedness in challenging work environments. When combined, emotional regulation and workplace spirituality create a synergistic framework that promotes resilience, well-being, and sustainable performance.

These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on psychological health in African work contexts and highlight the need for holistic employee well-being strategies. Nigerian organizations are therefore encouraged to invest in programs that cultivate emotional intelligence, foster spiritual connection, and promote meaning in work. Such efforts will not only reduce burnout but also enhance job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and long-term productivity.

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