

# EMPLOYEES' PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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# EMPLOYEES' PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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#### **SUMMARY**

The aim of the article is to reveal the employees' professional burnout in the context of their organizational commitment. Analysis of scientific literature, questionnaire survey, statistical data analysis including correlation analysis were used for achieving the aim. In this article we aim to answer the question: is there a relationship between employees' professional burnout and their organizational commitment? The results of the study showed that the respondents have an average level of commitment, the strongest commitment is affective, the weakest commitment is normative. Older, long-tenured workers and women have been found to be more committed to their workplace and have stronger emotional commitment than young employees, employees with short work experience and men. The obtained research results did not reveal strong signs of professional burnout although workers with less work experience were found to experience the highest levels of burnout. Nevertheless, it has been observed that there is a statistically significant and moderately negative correlation between employee commitment and professional burnout. The study results showed that affective commitment correlates most strongly with two dimensions of burnout: the dimension of depersonalization and the dimension of decrease in personal aspirations. As a result of the research, it has been stated that as employee professional burnout strengthens, their commitment diminishes.

**Keywords:** organizational commitment, types of organizational commitment, professional burnout, dimensions of burnout, signs of burnout

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### 1. Introduction

It is well-known that attracting and retaining employees nowadays become one of the most important goals of any organization. Therefore focus of many researches (Simonavičius, Kavaliauskienė, 2019; Alonderienė, Juknevičienė, 2017; Janonienė, Skučaitė, Endriulaitienė, 2015; Girdauskienė, 2011; Passarelli, 2011; Khan et al., 2010; Zeffane, 2010; Karakus, Aslan, 2009; Nehmeh, 2009; Bučiūnienė, 2006; Meyer et al., 2002; Vance, 2006; Mishra, 2005) is on employee organizational commitment, which is considered as one of the indicators of organizational success, including financial benefits, lower employee turnover, and increased employee motivation, especially today with a new generation coming into the labour market, which has a different approach to working relationships. The authors recognize that commitment is a strong link between the employee and the organization.

On the other hand, employees with a strong commitment to the organization are more committed to their work, and spend more time and energy on their work commitments (Allen, Meyer, 1990; Mathieu, Zajac, 1990). As a result, the employee is more likely to deplete the emotional resources available to him or her and to become exhausted more quickly. Due to the feeling of constant work-related tension and too little time for rest, employees feel exhausted, and work productivity falls. In the work environment, a factor that strongly affects the functioning of the employee and causes a negative psychological state is professional burnout (Genevičiūtė-Janonienė et al., 2015). The constant changes, endless problems both outside and inside the organization also have a negative impact on the employee's well-being and have a high probability of causing professional burnout (Abromaitienė, Stanišauskienė, 2014; Kavaliauskienė, Balčiūnaitė, 2014). Unfortunately, in recent years, many employees are experiencing professional burnout, which causes undesirable consequences for the organisation. Some studies show that professional burnout is experienced by as many as 30-40% of employees, irrespective of the area in which they work (Žiedelis, Pajarskienė, 2018). When analysing the scientific literature on professional burnout, it has been observed that many authors (Bukartienė, Jakimavičiūtė, Lukianskytė, 2017, etc.; Abromaitienė, Stanišauskienė, 2014; Kavaliauskienė, Balčiūnaitė, 2014; Merkys, Bubelienė, 2013; Maslach et al., 2001) emphasise that professional burnout is most often experienced by workers whose main part of their work is communicating with and caring for people, such as medical staff, educators, social workers, police officers, etc.

In this article we aim to answer the question: is there a relationship between employees' professional burnout and their organizational commitment? This question inspired following structure of the article: firstly, the concept and the forms of organizational commitment are analyzed, then the concept of burnout, its dimensions, and signs are described; in the last part the relationship between professional burnout and organizational commitment is revealed.

Analysis of scientific literature, questionnaire survey, statistical data analysis including correlation analysis were used for achieving the aim. The study was carried out in one of the medical institutions in Lithuania in order to determine the relationship between employees' organizational commitment and their professional burnout. 170 employees of administration and other non-medical departments participated in the questionnaire survey. Data from the quantitative questionnaire survey were processed with the *SPSS Statistics 29* program, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine the linear relationship of the analyzed phenomena, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the scales.

#### 2. Literature Review

## 2.1. The Concept and Forms of Organisational Commitment

The concept of employees' organizational commitment has been analysed by many researchers (Simonavičius, Kavaliauskienė, 2019; Janonienė, Skučaitė, Endriulaitienė, 2015; Jung and Kim, 2012; Kavaliauskienė, 2009; Petkevičiūtė, Vance, 2006; Kalinina, 2004; Allen, Mayer, 1991; Mathieu, Zajac, 1990 and others). ), but perhaps the greatest contribution to this concept was made by Becker (1960), who states that commitment to the organization is a process in which employees make a "group bet" with the organization, losing some of their freedom in terms of future behaviour (Mishra, 2005).

Kanter (1968), another of the first researchers on the commitment phenomenon, introduced the explanation that organizational commitment is a calculation of the benefits that can be gained by staying in the same organization and the losses that are associated with leaving the organization. It implies that the employee stays in the organization out of material incentive (Karakus, Aslan, 2009). A few years after the first definitions of commitment, Porter (1974) claimed that the concept of organizational commitment represents a strong belief in the values and goals of the organization. Strong commitment determines the employee's willingness to work hard for the organization and is manifested by the employee's strong desire to work for his or her particular organization for a long period of time. The latter concept differs from that of Kanter (1968), as it refers to an employee's moral rather than material bond to the organization (Kavaliauskienė, 2012; Vance, 2006).

The analysis of the concept of organisational commitment has shown that the commitment of an employee is defined in several ways:

- 1) as a certain attitude of the employee towards the organisation (Mikalauskaitė, Lipinskienė, 2011),
- 2) as an internal force or energising power that encourages appropriate behaviour towards the organisation, a kind of motivation to work (Meyer et al., 2006),

- 3) as a psychological bond with the organisation, which includes employees' feelings towards the organisation where they work, like the emotional comfort that comes from working in the organisation (Kumpikaitė, Rupšienė, 2008; Bučiūnienė, 2006; Mathieu, Zajac, 1990),
- 4) as the employee's degree of involvement and dedication to the organization (Jung and Kim, 2012) or
- 4) as an emotional state that binds the employee to the organisation, which is why the employee works for the organisation because he/she wants to, a strong emotional commitment to the organisation and a strong desire to work for the organisation as long as possible (Simonavičius, Kavaliauskienė, 2019; Nehmeh, 2009; Allen, Meyer, 1991).

An analysis of the concept of organizational commitment (Çiftçioğlu, Sabuncuoğlu, 2011; Kavaliauskiene, 2011 et al.; Khan et al., 2010; Bučiūnienė, 2006; Mishra, 2005) has shown that highly committed employees have three characteristics:

- 1. a strong belief in the organization's goals and values;
- 2. a willingness to make efforts for the good of the organization;
- 3. a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization, i.e. to work for the organization for a long time.

In summary, the concepts of organizational commitment are ambiguous, as scholars have approached the phenomenon from different contexts, highlighting one key feature that is appropriate to the specific case. A review of the definitions of organizational commitment proposed by different scholars suggests that it is a psychological state of the employee, which characterises the strong bond between him or her and the organisation, and which determines his or her decision to work in the organisation without thinking about the possibility of leaving. It means that the employee feels that he or she is important to the organization and, at the same time, the organization is important to the employee. The commitment of the employee is also expressed through a strong belief in the organization's goals, a recognition of its values, and a willingness to make an effort for the organization.

Analysis of scientific literature (Kavaliauskienė, 2012; Mikalauskaitė, Lipinskienė, 2011; Khan'as ir kt., 2010; Veršinskienė ir Večkienė, 2007; Lipinskienė, 2008; Meyer'is, Stanley, 2002;) allows stating that one of the most widely used theories in organizational commitment is Allen and Meyer's (1990) three-component model according to which three forms of the organizational commitment can be highlighted: affective, normative ir continuance.

Affective commitment, or in other words psychological attachment, refers to an employee's desire to stay with an organization for a long time because of the organization itself, because the

organization is an attractive place to work, because the employee is proud to belong to it, because the employee feels useful and needed by the organization, and because the employee likes the organization and wants to continue to be a member of the organization. Emotionally committed employees are loyal to their organization, they work harder and more responsibly than required. This means that employees work without coercion, not out of necessity, but because it gives them a sense of fulfilment, because they want to.

*Normative* commitment can be identified by the following indicators: staying with the organization because of a sense of duty; feeling a sense of dependency on the organization; staying with the organization because the supervisor and colleagues believe in and trust the employee; willingness to give back to the organization; and fear of leaving the organization because they don't want to disappoint the members. Thus, an employee with normative commitment tends to stay in the organization because he or she does not want to disappoint other members of the organization and is afraid to make changes.

In the case of a *continuance* commitment, the employee stays with the organisation because he or she realises that he or she would lose a lot by leaving and that it would be too costly or that he or she has no other choice and that staying with their current employer is the best alternative. Hence, working for the organization is beneficial for him or her. An analysis of the scientific literature reveals the following indicators of continuance commitment: the employee works as much as he or she is supposed to and will not try to do more; the relationship with the organization is kept for reasons of financial security, career prospects or perceived benefits; the lack of alternatives; and the unwillingness to be distracted and to switch from one organization to another. In summary, an employee who is committed in the form of a continuance commitment understands that it is more secure and beneficial to work for the current organization than to switch to another one or to be left with no choice at all.

According to Rana (2010), every employee in an organisation can be committed in various forms, but these are at different levels and can vary over time. One employee may feel a strong emotional commitment, while the other may feel a continuous commitment.

To conclude the literature review, organizational commitment is a strong emotional attachment to an organization and a desire to work there as long as possible. Committed employees believe in the goals of the organization and are willing to put in the effort for the good of the organization. Each employee's commitment to the organization can take different forms: affective, normative and continuance. Affective commitment refers to the positive connection of employees to the organization, their identification with it and their undisguised willingness to participate in the various activities offered by the organization. Continuance commitment is based on the employee's perceived loss if he or she were to leave the organization where he or she works, so continuance

commitment implies that the employee stays with the organization because it is in his or her interest. Normative commitment is defined as an employee's sense of obligation to stay with the organization where he/she works because of his/her perception that this behavior is the right thing to do for the employee and for the organization, and therefore normative commitment refers to an employee's sense of obligation to stay with the organization.

## 2.2. The Concept of Professional Burnout

Professional burnout among human service workers began to receive attention in the early 1970s (Maslach & Schaufeli, 2001). Freudenberger is considered to be the first to have taken a broader interest in the phenomenon of professional burnout. In 1974, the researcher noted that workers who are highly dutiful and dedicated to their work are more likely to burnout more often and more quickly, that the balance between work and rest is reduced, and that this has an impact on the employee's negative attitudes towards work and towards clients. Freudenberger considered that employees whose main part of their work is communicating with stakeholders, e.g. clients, patients, etc., and providing them with constant support leads to emotional and physical exhaustion, which leads to a worsened mental well-being of the employee, which leads to professional burnout (Bukartienė, Jakimavičiūtė, Lukianskytė, 2017; Abromaitienė, Stanišauskienė, 2014;). Soon after, in 1976, Maslach started to investigate the emotions that prevail in the work environment among employees who work in the service and medical fields. Maslach's findings are considered to be fundamental and are still used to this day. The above-mentioned authors, in their research, found that employees who work in the service sector, who are constantly interacting with people, expend a great deal of energy, which makes them feel exhausted, not so much physically as emotionally. To protect themselves from the negative emotions they feel at work, employees then become distant from other people, indifferent and withdrawn without even feeling it themselves. In the case of burnout, the employees disengage themselves from clients and the job, consequently their attitude changes from caring to indifference. (Bukartienė, Jakimavičiūtė, Lukianskytė, 2017; Bosman, Buitendach & Laba, 2005; Maslach et al., 2001).

Studies show that professional burnout is common among medical staff, teachers, social workers, police officers and others. Service workers, day in, day out, dealing with patients, clients, children, are related to stressful work, which leads to negative emotions and professional consequences that cause emotional exhaustion, cynicism, depression, poor quality of work, dissatisfaction with their job, etc. Bosman, Buitendach & Laba (2005) emphasize that burnout is the overall perception that one is giving more than one is receiving – in monetary rewards, recognition, support, or advancement, and that it can occur at all organizational levels, at all pay levels and in all age groups.

When analysing the concepts of professional burnout, it has emerged that the majority of researchers (Gudžinskienė, Pozdniakovas 2020; Smith and Segal 2015; Abromaitienė and Stanišauskienė, 2014; Kim, Stoner, 2008; Vimantaitė, 2007; Pacevičius, 2006; Schaufeli et al, 2001; Maslach, 2003; Ross, Altmaier, 1994; Pines, Aronson, 1981; etc.) describe professional burnout as an emotional exhaustion characterised by emotional fatigue, anxiety, irritability, constant tension, frequent mood swings, frustration with one's profession, and a lack of meaning in one's work. Bosman, Buitendach & Laba (2005) note that exhaustion is the main indicator of burnout. Authors state that this concept refers to employees' feelings that their physical and mental resources have been exhausted because of the continuous striving toward a work–related objective. It is often the result of too much work pressure and stress, particularly if the pressure arises from unattainable work goals.

According to Žiedelis and Pajarskienė (2018), professional burnout is most often expressed by symptoms such as persistent fatigue, anxiety, mood changes, distractedness, absent-mindedness, reduced willingness to go to work, reduced quality of work and productivity, reduced employee involvement in decision-making, etc. Workers experiencing burnout disengage from others, deny their experiences at work and change their behaviour. Researchers note that professional burnout is also indicated by symptoms such as an intense desire to be in control, devaluing and being cynical about other people, anger or guilt, and reduced self-esteem. According to Bosman, Buitendach & Laba (2005) burnout is accompanied by such symptoms as distress in the form of affective, cognitive, physical, and behavioral symptoms, a sense of reduced effectiveness, decreased motivation and dysfunctional attitudes and behaviors.

Why professional burnout occurs? Emotional exhaustion is caused by constant internal concern for others, constant stress, and continuous participation in emotionally difficult situations at work. Gudžinskienė (2012) points out that professional burnout is caused by disappointment caused by unfulfilled expectations and unmet needs. According to Abromaitienė and Stanišauskienė (2014), burnout occurs when an employee who has certain needs and goals is unable to fulfil them because the necessary conditions, opportunities and resources are not available. The same is happening with expectations and dreams, when they are not fulfilled, the employee no longer feels a sense of fulfillment in performing his/her duties, and finally the employee feels frustrated, his/her hands are shaken and he/she no longer feels important and needed.

Lipinskienė and Gapšinė (2022), after an analysis of the scientific literature (Pacevičius, 2006; Kristensen, 2005; Schaufeli, Greenglass, 2001), point out that researchers also describe professional burnout as a form of physical burnout, which is the result of the physical fatigue and exhaustion that results from working under difficult working conditions, the employee's lack of rest, and, ultimately, the body's depletion of its own resources. The authors note that when a worker is constantly feeling unrested, his or her motivation to go to work disappears, he or she is no longer willing to put in the

effort because he or she no longer sees the work as meaningful, the work is no longer enjoyable, activity and initiative are reduced, and frequent headaches, insomnia, overeating, and a lack of energy occur, which makes it difficult to perform well.

In this paper, we understand occupational burnout as the result of continuous and uncontrollable stress at work, which leads to emotional exhaustion, a loss of desire to strive, personal achievement and depersonalization.

#### 2.3. The Dimensions of Professional Burnout

According to Jung & Kim (2012) burnout can lead to deterioration in quality of work and is associated with job turnover, absenteeism, low morale and personal distress, including physical exhaustion.

When analyzing the phenomenon of professional burnout, researchers (Marek, Schaufeli & Maslach, 2017; Jung & Kim, 2012; Bosman, Buitendach & Laba, 2005; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001 and others) in both theoretical and empirical research have tended to examine the Maslach model, which includes three dimensions of professional burnout:

- (1) the first and most significant component of burnout is a feeling of emotional exhaustion (a lack of energy and a feeling that one's emotional resources depleted, which may coexist with feelings of frustration and tension),
- (2) depersonalization (typically occurs after emotional exhaustion, it tends to be a direct response to the stressors of the job and refers to an individual's personal detachment from work and the development of negative, cynical attitudes and feelings toward one's clients, also treating them as objects rather than people) and
- (3) reduced personal accomplishment (the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively and to decline one's feelings of competence and successful achievement). Burnout is indicated by higher scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, coupled with lower scores on personal accomplishment.

The dimension of *emotional exhaustion* is usually presented as a core symptom of professional burnout in the scientific literature (Lazauskaitė - Zabielskė, Urbanavičiūtė, Rekašiūtė - Balsienė, 2017; Abromaitienė, Stanišauskienė, 2014; Bakker et al. 2004). Emotional exhaustion is defined in the scientific literature as fatigue, overwork, exhaustion, feeling weak, lack of energy and exhaustion of emotional resources. Exhaustion at work is most often caused by long-term exposure to continuous stressors, after which the exhausted person is no longer willing to engage in new activities or interact with other people. It can also result from prolonged stress, unfavourable working conditions and high

job demands that are not compensated by adequate work resources (Gudžinskienė & Pozdniakovas, 2020; Bakker et al., 2004).

Depersonalization dimension. Depersonalization is perceived as emotional and physical detachment, alienation from others, maintaining a distance, and making communication with other people at work cold and formal (Marek, Schaufeli & Maslach, 2017). The employee also starts to behave in a cynical, insolent and disrespectful manner (Gudžinskienė & Pozdniakovas 2020). Vaicekauskienė (2014) emphasizes that this dimension of professional burnout manifests itself in a superficial approach to one's work and duties, a feeling of disinterest and a negative attitude and reaction, e.g., in the service sphere, where people, such as clients or patients of the organization, need to be provided with services. In the case of depersonalization, employees start to 'label' their patients, clients or other stakeholders without feeling it. Mikalauskas et al. (2016) point out that this is an indifferent, backward human reaction to the people with whom one works, and that relationships with people become formal, as if impersonal. Finally, depersonalization can be explained as a worker's desire to escape from others, to distance himself or herself, thus protecting himself or herself from unwanted feelings, overwork or frustration.

The dimension of *reduced personal aspirations* is defined as the employee's feelings of self-depreciation and lack of self-confidence (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001). The employee feels as if his/her competence is no longer sufficient to perform his/her duties properly, leading to dissatisfaction and negative attitudes towards work. The employee no longer feels important and his/her performance and willingness to perform decreases. At that time, the employee may feel that his/her profession and activities do not allow him/her to achieve his/her goals or meet his/her expectations. Bosman, Buitendach & Laba (2005) in their literature review highlight that individuals in this phase of burnout view themselves negatively in both their ability to perform the job and their ability to have positive personal interactions. Various researchers (Gudžinskienė and Pozdniakovas, 2020; Vaicekauskiene, 2014) have noted that employees may feel that the effort and time they put into performing their daily tasks at work is wasted. It is also noted in the literature that when a person is unable to realise his or her potential, when the expectations created do not materialise, then the employee perceives him or herself as useless, incompetent and incapable of meeting the expectations of his or her superiors and colleagues around him. This dimension therefore focuses more on the employee himself and the feelings he experiences.

Burisch (2002) divided the main symptoms of professional burnout into six groups, which are characterized by the characteristic signs of professional burnout: warning symptoms in the early phase, reduced commitment, emotional reactions and blaming, weakening, psychosomatic reactions, changes in spirituality (Žiedelis and Pajarskienė, 2018; Mikalauskas and Širvinskas et al., 2016; Vimantaitė, 2007).

Warning symptoms appear at the very beginning of professional burnout. At first, the employee's dedication to the job is seen as positive, but if this continues for too long, signs of burnout appear. Thus, initially, a burnt-out employee may demonstrate increased commitment to achieving goals, i.e. to volunteer for unpaid overtime; not seeing mistakes and disappointments; being constantly busy, feeling like you never have time; stop making new social contacts. Later, symptoms of exhaustion such as constant fatigue, lost or reduced energy, or an increased risk of accidents can warn of burnout.

Reduced commitment is shown by such symptoms as the employee's reduced desire to share, coldness and cynicism, inability to empathize, reduced willingness to listen to others, avoidance of informal contacts, introspection and loneliness. Moving from a positive state, when the goals are enthusiastically pursued, an emotional, conscious distancing of the employee from his environment is observed, and finally the employee begins to distance himself from both work and colleagues. Such employees allienate themselves from their customers, no longer have a positive attitude when communicating with customers, feel bored at work, postpone important work, and constantly wait for the end of the working day. The employee, constantly feeling the pressure from above, feels tension. The feeling that you cannot control anything yourself, and the inability to fulfill the expectations of yourself or those around you, gradually changes the employee's perception of work. Finally, the employee begins to hate his job, colleagues, and customers. All this leads to the third group of signs of professional burnout - emotional reaction: aggression or depression.

Aggression is shown by the employee's constant reproaches to others and a decreased sense of respect for them; he does not admit his mistakes; displays flirtatious behavior and clings to trifles; pessimism, irritability and anger and frequent conflicts with others may also occur. Depression is characterized by a constant feeling of self-blame; not taking care of oneself; emotional weakness; mood swings and tendency to cry; feelings of sadness and meaninglessness or negativity and apathy; restlessness and nervousness.

In the case of *weakening*, burnout manifests itself in several ways: 1) reduced employee capacity, i.e. he is unable to concentrate, his memory weakens, he is no longer able to solve problems, disorganization appears, indifference increases, 2) decreased motivation of the employee, i.e. weakened initiative, intuition, orientation and work efficiency, the employee works according to instructions, only what he must do and no more, 3) weakened creativity, when the employee's flexibility, imagination and lack of ideas decrease. Thus, during the weakening, it becomes more and more difficult for the employee to concentrate, make appropriate decisions, motivation and creativity weaken, resistance to any changes begins.

Psychosomatic reactions show how the human body reacts to a certain situation. These include such indicators of burnout as the inability to relax; disturbed sleep, unpleasant dreams; various

allergies appear; abnormal heart rhythm; difficulty breathing, causing shortness of breath; chest pressure; increased blood pressure; tense muscles; back or headache, indigestion, nausea, stomach, intestinal spasms.

Changes in spirituality indicate that the employee is in despair and needs professional help. The indicators of this group of signs of burnout become the employee's pessimistic attitude towards life; the feeling that everything around is hopeless and meaningless, a feeling of existential despair; the employee gives up his hobbies, gets bored and is no longer interested in anything around him.

Summarizing the literature review, it became clear that professional burnout is a long-lasting state, when employees feel physically and emotionally exhausted, distance themselves from other people, become indifferent and closed in on themselves. Professional burnout occurs as a result of constant care for others, constant stress, physical exhaustion, when work no longer brings joy. There are three dimensions of professional burnout that characterize professional burnout: emotional and physical exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal aspirations. Emotional exhaustion occurs as a result of prolonged exposure to continuous stressors, after which the exhausted person no longer wants to engage in new activities or communicate with others. Depersonalization can manifest itself in emotional detachment from others, cynicism, formal relationships at work, and a casual approach to work. Reduced personal aspirations manifests itself in the employee's self-doubt, increased sense of inefficiency. Different signs of employee burnout are distinguished in each stage of professional burnout.

## 3. Methodology

The data in the present research were acquired from a sample of 170 employees working in administration and other non-medical departments of one of Lithuania's hospitals (further in the text – *hospital*).

The major part (71.8 %) of participants were women (22.4% men, 5.9% didn't want to indicate the gender). In terms of age, 4.7% of the participants were 30 years old and below, 30.6% between 31 and 45 years old; 50% were between 46 and 60 years old; 14.7% were over 61 years old. The distribution of the work experience of the participants was similar: 28.2% of the participants has a work experience between 1 and 5 years, 27.6% has an experience of 6 to 15 years, 17.1% has an experience of 16 to 25 years, 15.9% has an experience of 26 to 35 years, and 11.2% has an experience of 36 years and above.

The study first seeks to determine whether the hospital's administrative staff and other non-medical staff are committed to the organization in which they work, the most common form of commitment, and the number of years they have been working in the current institution. It then seeks to find out whether the staff feel tired or exhausted by their current job or by their profession. Finally,

it looks for the relationship between commitment and professional burnout and seeks to compare what trends emerge among different groups of respondents. Thus, the study sought to find out whether an employee's commitment to the organization has a correlation with professional burnout.

To achieve the goal of the study, two diagnostic blocks were formed: organizational commitment and professional burnout. A 5-point scale (1 = "totally disagree" to 5 = "totally agree") was used to measure the variables of the study. The data and means were interpreted as follows: from 1.0 to 1.7 the phenomenon's level of expression is very weak, from 1.8 to 2.5 the expression is weak, from 2.6 to 3.4 – the expression of the phenomenon is medium, from 3.5 to 4.2 the expression is strong, over 4.3 – very strong.

Measurement of organizational commitment. Employees' degree and form of organizational commitment was measured using 8 items (24 variables) scale which includes three sub-dimensions such as affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. The Cronbach alpha value of the scale was found to be .92 which indicates sufficient internal reliability of the variables that indicate employees' commitment, and it was decided to use this scale for the current research study.

Measurement of professional burnout. Employees' degree of professional burnout was measured using 8 items (51 variables) scale which includes three sub-dimensions such as depersonalization, reduced personal aspirations and emotional and physical exhaustion. The Cronbach alpha value of the scale was found to be .94 which indicates sufficient internal reliability of the variables that indicate employees' professional burnout, and it was decided to use this scale for the current research study.

Correlation analysis was carried out to reveal the relationship between employees' organizational commitment and their professional burnout. It was found that the data are distributed normally and no outliers are found therefore the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the strength of the statistical relationship between the phenomena analysed.

### 4. The Study Findings

### 4.1. The Expression of Employees' Commitment to The Organization

The results of the study showed that the participants' affective commitment is strong (mean (M) = 3.5) despite the fact that the general level of employee commitment to the organization is average (M = 3.4) (results are presented in fig. 1). The continuance commitment is slightly weaker (M = 3.4), and the normative commitment is the weakest of all three forms of commitment (M = 3.2). A high level of affective commitment was determined by the fact that the participants would be sad to leave their colleagues (M = 3.9, Standard Deviation (SD) = .942), they are happy to work in this institution (M = 3.8, SD = .827), they like what they do (M = 3.8, SD = .990) and are willing to make

great efforts for the benefit of the hospital (M = 3.7, SD = .904). Research data allow stating that the respondents feel good enough in their current workplace, are emotionally committed, which creates a positive working atmosphere.

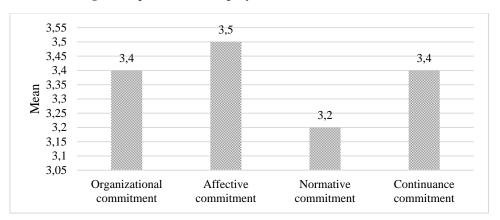


Fig. 1: Expression of Employees' Commitment and Its Forms

The determined level of employees' continuous commitment allows us to assume that the research participants feel that they have invested a lot of time and effort for the well-being of the institution (M = 3.9, SD = .870), and therefore would not want to lose it all. The results of the survey also show that most of them are afraid of losing their main source of income (M = 3.6, SD = 1.029) and do not believe that they could find a better job offer elsewhere (M = 3.2, SD = 1.025) or earn more (M = 3.0, SD = 1.092). So, some of the employees work in this hospital because working here is financially beneficial for them, and receiving timely and constant wages does not cause them additional stress. It can also be concluded that the salary meets their expectations and needs, as a result of which the respondents realize that they would lose a lot by leaving this workplace. Also, a large number of respondents have been working in this institution for more than 20 years, everything is familiar to them, it is like their second home, so it is obvious that they would be sorry to lose what they have built up during their long years of work and that staying with their current employer is the best the alternative they have.

Next, the expression of commitment in different age groups of the participants is analyzed. It should be noted that although the overall level of commitment in all age groups is similar (mean range from 3.3 to 3.4), certain differences emerged when analyzing the results according to forms of commitment. Participants over the age of 50 are the most emotionally committed (M = 3.7), respondents under the age of 30 are the least (M = 3.3). Analyzing the expression of the continuous form of commitment, it was observed that the strongest expression of the continuous form is in the group of the youngest respondents, up to 30 years old (M = 3.7), the weakest - in the group of 31-45 years old (M = 3.4). The mean values of normative commitment are fairly evenly distributed across age groups, which indicates that employees feel grateful to the employer for having the opportunity to

work in this hospital, and as a result, employees feel a sense of duty not to disappoint their colleagues and supervisors.

Although the difference is very minimal, it can be observed that women are more committed to their workplace (M = 3.4) than men (M = 3.3).

Next, the expression of commitment is analyzed in different groups of respondents according to their work experience. Analyzing the research data, it was found that the respondents with the longest working experience (from 36 to 45 years) and those who have worked for 26 to 35 years have the highest commitment (respectively M = 3.7 and M = 3.5). The affective commitment of these participants is also the highest (M = 3.9). It should be noted that the expression of forms of continuous and normative commitment is also strongest among respondents with 36-45 years of experience (respectively M = 3.8 and M = 3.5). The distribution of the means of expression of the forms of commitment of the other participants was similar: the means of the organizational commitment ranged from M = 3.29 to 3.34, affective – from M = 3.36 to M = 3.42, continuous – from M = 3.3 to M = 3.4, normative – from M = 3.1 to M = 3.2.

The results of the research suggest that the weakest commitment of employees to the organization is felt in the first year of work, because employees who have recently started working have not yet had time to integrate into the team, get to know the prevailing processes in the institution, as a result, they are less emotionally dependent on it and are still afraid to connect their future with their workplace. In summary, it can be said that long-term employees feel part of the organization, they are valued and respected, they know all the employees of the organization and understand the work processes, which leads to a higher level of commitment.

During the study, it was assessed whether affective, normative and continuance commitment correlates with age, gender and work experience. The results of the correlation analysis show that there is a stronger relationship between women and affective commitment (r=0.717, p<0.01) than between men and affective commitment (r=0.405, p<0.05). Analyzing the results of the correlation analysis, it can be seen that there is a strong relationship between normative commitment and respondents who are older than 61 years (r=0.919, p<0.01). A strong relationship was established between respondents with longer working experience and normative commitment (r=0.954, p<0.01) and affective commitment (r=0.914, p<0.01).

# 4.2. The Expression of Professional Burnout

The expression of professional burnout was assessed by analyzing the general level of burnout and determining the expression of professional burnout dimensions: reduced personal aspirations, depersonalization, and emotional and physical exhaustion. The summarized results of the study allow

us to state that the level of professional burnout of the participants is weak (M=2.4) (results are presented in fig. 2).

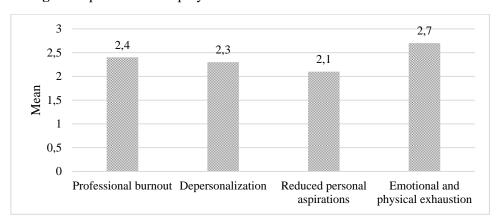


Fig. 2: Expression of Employees' Professional Burnout and Its Dimensions

A deeper analysis of the results showed that the personal aspirations of the research participants have not decreased (M=2.1), and their depersonalization is also weak (M=2.3). These results allow us to say that employees do not look at work superficially, are interested in performing their duties properly without negative reactions, and relations with colleagues are not cold and purely formal. The employees who participated in the study do not lack self-confidence, they positively evaluate their competences and their work meets their expectations. However, it should be noted that the level of exhaustion of the participants is average (M=2.7), which means that employees feel overworked, feel a sense of weakness, lack of energy, which can occur due to constant tension at work or due to excessive demands, which over time makes the employee frustrated not only yourself but also your profession (M ranges from 1.9 to 3.8, SD ranges from .939 to 1.192).

Next, the expression of burnout in different age, gender and work experience groups is analyzed.

Research data show that the weakest expression of professional burnout is in the group of older workers over 51 years old and over 61 years old (respectively M=2.2 and M=2.1). The burnout of younger participants is slightly stronger (mean ranges from 2.4 to 2.5). It can be assumed that young employees underestimate themselves and are not confident in their abilities in the new workplace, because they may feel that their competence is not enough to perform their duties properly. Employees may feel that they are no longer so important, which can lead to a decrease in work efficiency and the desire to achieve results.

Analyzing the expression of the dimensions of professional burnout, it was found that exhaustion is the strongest in all age groups: young research participants under the age of 50 are the

most emotionally and physically exhausted (M=2.8). It should be noted that although the main indicator of professional burnout is the dimension of emotional exhaustion, the expression of emotional exhaustion among employees over the age of 61 is weak (M=2.5) (results are presented in fig. 3.)

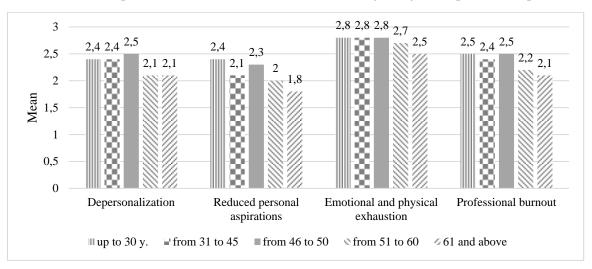


Fig. 3: Expression of Professional Burnout According to Age Groups of Participants

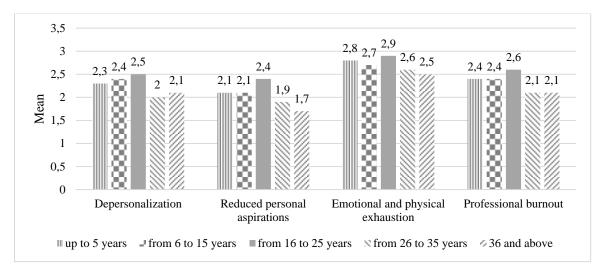
The collected research data allows us to say that younger respondents are the most likely to burn out. It can be assumed that young people who do not yet have a lot of work experience often experience an emotional shock when it turns out that their dream job does not meet their expectations or needs when they get a job, so they are likely to be more prone to burnout at the beginning of their careers.

When assessing who - men or women - are more likely to experience professional burnout, it became clear that although the level of burnout is the same (M=2.4), men still feel more exhausted (M=2.8) than women (M=2.7).

Further analyzing the expression of the dimensions of professional burnout according to the respondents' work experience, it was found that the strongest level of burnout is felt by research participants with 16 to 25 years of work experience (M = 2.6), and the weakest level of burnout is felt by research participants with 26 years of work experience and more (M = 2.1) (results are presented in fig. 4.).

Fig. 4: Expression of Professional Burnout According to Work Experience of Participants

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The most emotionally and physically exhausted are respondents who have worked at the hospital from 16 to 25 years (M = 2.9), up to 5 years (M = 2.8), and from 6 to 15 years (M = 2.7). It can be assumed that the employees who have worked the longest have already come to terms with the current situation, work as they are used to, probably, there are no longer any situations that cause tension or stress for them, or are unknown. Competence and experience gained over many years of work allow them to feel comfortable in their workplace. It is likely that employees whose work experience is up to 15 years still have big goals, have prospects, are still trying to adapt to new technologies, to various organizational processes, want to justify their own and others' expectations, as a result of constant efforts to please, build a good reputation can gradually exhausting the employee, which eventually causes emotional and physical exhaustion leading to professional burnout.

During the study, it was evaluated whether there is a relationship between the dimensions of professional burnout such as depersonalization, reduction of personal aspirations and exhaustion, and factors such as age, gender and work experience of the respondents. When analyzing the results of the correlational analysis, a very strong relationship between male respondents and the decrease in their personal aspirations was found (r = 0.927, p < 0.01). Also, a strong relationship was found between personal aspirations and respondents under 30 years of age (r = 0.972, p < 0.01).

# 4.3. The Relationship Between Employees' Professional Burnout and Their Organizational Commitment

The following aims to determine whether commitment and its forms correlate with professional burnout and its dimensions. Correlation analysis showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between employees' commitment and their professional burnout (results are presented in Table 1).

**Table 1:** The Relationship Between Employee Burnout and Their Commitment

Correlation		Commitment	<b>Professional burnout</b>
	Pearson Correlation	1	-,493**
Commitment	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001
	N	170	170
	Pearson Correlation	-,493**	1
Professional burnout	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	
	N	170	170

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

There is a moderate negative correlation between employee commitment and professional burnout (r = -0.493, p < 0.01). This means that as commitment increases, professional burnout decreases and vice versa.

When assessing the statistical relationship between professional burnout and forms of commitment, it became clear that a statistically significant relationship exists only with affective commitment (r = -0.681, p < 0.01) (results are presented in Table 2).

**Table 2:** The Relationship Between Professional Burnout and Forms of Employee Commitment

		Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment	Professional burnout
A 66 4.	Pearson Correlation	1	,298**	,306**	-,681**
Affective commitment	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	170	170	170	170
	Pearson Correlation	,298**	1	,681**	0,014
Continuance commitment	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	0,855
	N	170	170	170	170
	Pearson Correlation	,306**	,681**	1	-0,037
Normative commitment	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		0,639
	N	170	170	170	170
	Pearson Correlation	-,681**	0,014	-0,037	1
Professional burnout	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	0,855	0,639	
	N	170	170	170	170

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

Analyzing the correlations between the forms of commitment and the dimensions of professional burnout revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between the affective commitment of employees and the dimensions of professional burnout (results are presented in Table 3). Moderate negative relationships exist between affective commitment and depersonalization (r =  $0.638 \ p < 0.01$ ), reduction of personal aspirations (r = -0.617, p < 0.01) and between exhaustion (r = 0.486, p < 0.01). Consequently, the stronger the affective commitment of the employees of the administration and other non-medical departments, the weaker the depersonalization, reduction of personal aspirations and exhaustion.

Table 3: The Relationship Between The Dimensions of Employees' Affective Commitment and Burnout

					Depersona- lization	personal	Emotional and physical exhaustion
		arson orrelation	,298**	,306**	-,638**	-,617**	-,486**
ffective	Sig	g. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
Affe	commitm N		170	170	170	170	170

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

The results of the correlation analysis show that there is a statistically significant relationship between the dimensions of professional burnout and employee commitment (results are presented in Table 4).

 Table 4: The Relationship Between Dimensions of Employee Commitment and Burnout

		Depersonalization	Reduced personal aspirations	Emotional and physical exhaustion	Commitment
Domongonoli	Pearson Correlation	1	,753**	,526**	-,476**
Depersonali- zation	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	170	170	170	170
Reduced	Pearson Correlation	,753**	1	,583**	-,408**
personal aspirations	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	<,001
aspirations	N	170	170	170	170
Emotional	Pearson Correlation	,526**	,583**	1	-,375**
and physical exhaustion	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		<,001
	N	170	170	170	170
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	-,476**	-,408**	-,375**	1

Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	
N	170	170	170	170

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

A moderate negative relationship was found between commitment and depersonalization (r = -0.476 p < 0.01) and a decrease in personal aspirations (r = -0.408 p < 0.01), while a weak negative relationship was found between commitment and the exhaustion dimension (r = -0.375 p < 0.01). Consequently, when an organization takes care of the comprehensive well-being of employees, promotes loyalty, there is less chance that employees will suffer from professional burnout, which negatively affects the quality of work, employee efficiency and even harms their health.

#### 5. Conclusion and Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between organizational commitment and professional burnout of employees working in one of hospitals in Lithuania. Summarizing the results of the study, it can be stated that the professional burnout of employees correlates with their commitment because a statistically significant, average negative relationship was determined. It should be noted that the correlation between professional burnout and employee commitment is moderately negative, which means that as employee professional burnout strengthens, their commitment weakens and vice versa. A statistically significant relationship was also found between affective commitment and depersonalization, personal aspirations, and emotional and physical exhaustion. Meanwhile, no statistically significant relationship was found with the forms of continuous and normative commitment. Although some studies show different results, for example, Dinc, Kuzey, Gungormus & Atalay (2020) examined the impact of the organisational commitment components agreed to by accountants with regard to their job burnout dimensions. Their results showed that while continuance commitment is an important predictor of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation, the dimensions of burnout, affective and normative commitment, are negatively associated with depersonalisation and emotional exhaustion types of burnout, respectively.

The study also allowed to indicate strong affective commitment and weak professional burnout. The analysis of the expression of the dimensions of professional burnout revealed that the level of emotional and physical exhaustion of employees is average, and the expression of depersonalization and reduction of personal aspirations is low. This resulted in an average overall level of professional burnout among the participants. The obtained research results did not reveal strong signs of professional burnout. It was found that the professional burnout of women, older workers and those who have been working for 26 years and more is low and the average professional burnout was observed among younger workers under the age of 30. It was determinated that exhaustion as the main indacator of professional burnout in all age groups was average.

The results of the study showed that older, long-tenured workers and women have been found to be more committed to their workplace and have stronger emotional commitment than under 30 years of age employees, employees with short work experience and men.

It should be noted that affective commitment correlates most strongly with two dimensions of burnout: the dimension of depersonalization and the dimension of decrease in personal aspirations. On the other hand, no statistically significant relationship was found between the dimensions of professional burnout and normative commitment and continuance commitment. Thus, it can be concluded that the stronger the respondents' affective commitment, the weaker is their professional burnout and vice versa.

The findings of the research are consistent with the previous studies found in the literature which highlight that because of burnout, employees feel diminished commitment to the organization and that the burnout predicts the commitment (Dinc, Kuzey, Gungormus & Atalay, 2020; Pehlivanoğlu & Köse, 2020; Jung & Kim, 2012; etc.). The results of this study might have some practical implications and might be used as guidelines for human resource managers who develop internal strategies for reducing the risk of negative effects of burnout on organisational commitment. It is important to create friendly organizational environment, safe working conditions and make other efforts to increase employee commitment, particularly affective commitment, and reduce burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion. In failing to do so employees with low organisational commitment will experience high burnout and, conversely, employees with high burnout will work with lower organisational commitment.

All conclusions apply only to this study sample. The study has some limitations, so the results need to be evaluated in this sample. The results of the study are limited to the perception of 170 employees working in one of the Lithuanian medical institutions. Surveys with larger sample sizes may give different results. Repeating the study with a geographically diverse sample, including other medical and non-medical institutions, cities and countries, a more comprehensive analysis can be conducted. The analysis can be expanded further to cover other industries and employees in future studies.

Also, as the result of the research, it was determined that both professional burnout and commitment are related to the demographic characteristics of the participants such as age, gender and work experience. The short list of sociodemographic indicators leads to another limitation of this study, therefore future research might specify and test the correlation between professional burnout and commitment by analysing the data on socio-demographic criteria other than age, gender and work experience.

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Appendixes

# **Correlation of Professional Burnout and Age of Employees**

		Depersonalization	Reduced personal aspirations	Emotional and physical exhaustion
Professional	Pearson Correlation	,897**	,972**	,840**
burnout	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,003	<,001	0,009
up to 30 years	N	8	8	8
Professional	Pearson Correlation	,919**	,902**	,733**
burnout	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
from 31 to 45 years	N	52	52	52
Professional	Pearson Correlation	,905**	,941**	,810**
burnout	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
from 46 to 50 years	N	39	39	39
Professional	Pearson Correlation	,777**	,911**	,810**
from 51 to 60 years	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	46	46	46
Professional	Pearson Correlation	,945**	,896**	,695**
burnout	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
61 and above	N	25	25	25

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

# **Correlation of Professional Burnout and Working Experience of Employees**

		Depersonalization	Reduced personal aspirations	Emotional and physical exhaustion
Proffesional	Pearson Correlation	,875**	,897**	,625**
burnout	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
up to 5 years	N	48	48	48
Proffesional	Pearson Correlation	,913**	,911**	,770**
burnout from 6 to 15	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
years	N	47	47	47
Proffesional	Pearson Correlation	,943**	,949**	,932**
burnout	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
from 16 to 25 years	N	29	29	29
Proffesional	Pearson Correlation	,744**	,969**	,874**
burnout	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
from 26 to 35 years	N	27	27	27
Proffesional burnout	Pearson Correlation	,948**	,922**	,757**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
36 years and above	N	19	19	19

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

# Correlation of Organizational Commitment and Age of Employees

		Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment
G	Pearson Correlation	,598**	,825**	,832**
Commitment up to 5 years	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
up to 5 years	N	48	48	48
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	,671**	,889**	,879**
from 6 to 15	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	<,001	<,001
years	N	47	47	47
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	,486**	,792**	,858**
from 16 to 25	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,007	<,001	<,001
years	N	29	29	29
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	,721**	,765**	,817**
from 26 to 35	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
years	N	27	27	27
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	,914**	,862**	,954**
36 years and	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
above	N	19	19	19

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

# Correlation Between Forms of Organizational Commitment and Dimensions of Professional Burnout

		Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment	<b>Deperson</b> alization	Reduced personal aspirations	Emotion al and physical exhausti on
tive	Pearson Correlation	1	,298**	,306**	-,638**	-,617**	-,486**
Affective	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
A	N	170	170	170	170	170	170
Continuance	Pearson Correlation	,298**	1	,681**	-,023	,084	-,020
ntin	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	,764	,280	,801
Co	N	170	170	170	170	170	170
Normative	Pearson Correlation	,306**	,681**	1	-,046	,033	-,089
orm	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		,556	,675	,249
Ž	N	170	170	170	170	170	170
zation	Pearson Correlation	-,638**	-,023	-,046	1	,753**	,526**
nali	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	,764	,556		<,001	<,001
Depersonalization	N	170	170	170	170	170	170
Reduced personal aspirations	Pearson Correlation	-,617**	,084	,033	,753**	1	,583**
Reduced personal spiration	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	,280	,675	<,001		<,001
F p	N	170	170	170	170	170	170
Exhaustion	Pearson Correlation	-,486**	-,020	-,089	,526**	,583**	1
chau	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	,801	,249	<,001	<,001	
	N	170	170	170	170	170	170

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

# **Correlation of Employee Gender With Commitment**

		Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment
	Pearson Correlation	,405*	,721**	,867**
Commitment <i>Man</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,012	<,001	<,001
Wian	N	38	38	38
	Pearson Correlation	,717**	,866**	,858**
Commitment <i>Woman</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
Woman	N	122	122	122

<sup>\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed)

# **Correlation of Workers' Gender With Professional Burnout**

		Depersonalization	Reduced personal aspirations	Emotional and physical exhaustion
Professional	Pearson Correlation	,900**	,927**	,776**
burnout	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
Man	N	38	38	38
Professional	Pearson Correlation	,907**	,926**	,784**
burnout	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001
Woman	N	122	122	122

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)