

Workplace gaslighting is associated with workers job burnout and turnover intention in Greece

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Abstract

Background: Workplace gaslighting is an underexplored psychosocial stressor that may exacerbate burnout and turnover among employees. **Aim:** This study examined associations between gaslighting, job burnout, and turnover intention in Greek workers using a cross-sectional design. **Methods:** The study was conducted in January 2025 with a sample (N = 291) of workers based on convenience sampling. Data from networking via professional social media Information was obtained using an online survey shared among professional social media groups. Workplace gaslighting was assessed using the Gaslighting at Work Scale (GWS), job burnout using the Single-Item Burnout Measure, and turnover intention on a reliable six-point Likert scale. Demographic information consisted of gender, age, education level, and years of work experience (potential confounders). Linear regression models were used to explore the relationship between workplace gaslighting and the two outcomes, adjusting for confounders. **Results:** Participants were mainly female (77%), and the mean age was 42.2 years (SD = 10.3), with a mean duration of work experience of 16.7 years (SD = 9.5). High job burnout (mean = 6.8) and turnover intentions (mean = 3.1) were reported. There were significant positive correlations between workplace gaslighting and burnout ($r = 0.230$, $p < 0.01$) and workplace gaslighting and turnover intention ($r = 0.385$, $p < 0.01$). In multivariable regression analyses, workplace gaslighting was positively associated with job burnout ($b = 0.616$, 95% CI = 0.466–0.765, $p < 0.001$) and turnover

intention ($b = 0.581$, 95% CI = 0.414–0.748, $p < 0.001$). **Conclusion:** Workplace gaslighting was strongly associated with both burnout and turnover intention in workers. These results highlight the negative effects of gaslighting at work, and direct to the relevance of organizational interventions geared to prevent gaslighting in order to achieve employee well-being while diminishing staff turnover.

Keywords: workplace; gaslighting; job; burnout; turnover intention; employees; workers; Greece

Introduction

In today's economy, the workforce faces multiple challenges related to increased job insecurity, work intensification, and heightened psychosocial demands in the workplace (Chen et al., 2023; Lukan et al., 2022). Accelerated work rhythms, multitasking requirements, high performance targets, and constant technological adaptation create an environment where employees often operate at the limits of their endurance (Lemos et al., 2022; Maqsood et al., 2024). Data from Greece and other countries have shown that economic crises, fiscal austerity, persistently high unemployment rates, and limited resources have amplified these pressures, particularly in critical sectors such as healthcare and education (Chatrakul Na Ayudhya et al., 2019; Nella et al., 2015). Recent evidence indicates that among Greek nurses, 50.2% report strong turnover intention, while 74.3% are categorized as “quiet quitters” under current working conditions (Galanis et al., 2025a). The aforementioned highlight a significant challenge within the Greek healthcare system, where such intentions and behaviors among nurses can critically compromise patient care quality and safety,

alongside diminishing overall productivity (Galanis et al., 2023a; Moisoglou et al., 2025). Within this context, two key constructs in occupational psychology - job burnout and turnover intention - have attracted significant scholarly attention.

Burnout is defined as a multidimensional syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization or cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy (Mahmod & Rosari, 2020). Employees experiencing burnout feel depleted of energy, emotionally detached from colleagues and clients, and perceive diminished effectiveness in their work roles (Golonka & Gulla, 2021). Greek studies have consistently demonstrated that factors such as excessive workload and limited organizational support are strongly associated with higher burnout and intentions to leave the job (Koustelios, 2001; Voultos et al., 2022). For instance, in hospital settings, high workload was significantly linked to elevated burnout, with approximately half of nurses expressing serious turnover intentions (Galanis et al., 2025a). Also, healthcare professionals experiencing burnout are more likely to adopt quiet quitting as a work behavior (Galanis et al., 2025b).

Turnover intention, in turn, is defined as an employee's conscious willingness or likelihood to leave their current position within a given time frame (Zhang et al., 2023). It is widely recognized as the proximal antecedent of actual turnover, with international research confirming that high turnover intention is a robust predictor of subsequent resignations (Ahmad Saufi et al., 2023; Oh et al., 2023). Understanding the antecedents of turnover intention is therefore critical for organizational sustainability and workforce retention.

Previous studies in Greece have highlighted the role of workplace stressors such as bullying and toxic leadership in fostering both burnout and turnover intention (Galanis et al., 2024; Gkontelos et al., 2023). However, one particularly insidious yet underexplored form of psychological abuse in

organizational contexts is workplace gaslighting, a subtle and manipulative strategy that undermines employees' psychological stability (Moisoglou et al., 2025).

Gaslighting, originally conceptualized in clinical psychology, refers to a form of psychological manipulation whereby perpetrators cause victims to doubt their own perception, memory, or judgment (Kukreja & Pandey, 2023). In the workplace, gaslighting may manifest as trivialization of experiences, distortion or denial of facts, withholding of information, shifting of blame, or applying pressure that generates insecurity in employees. Emerging empirical evidence from Greece suggests that workplace gaslighting is significantly correlated with both burnout and turnover intention. Among nurses, higher gaslighting levels were positively associated with burnout and turnover intention, and multivariate analyses confirmed its predictive role for both outcomes (Moisoglou et al., 2025). Moreover, nearly 49.8% of nurses in the same study reported high turnover intention, while mean burnout levels were substantially elevated (Moisoglou et al., 2025).

Building upon this evidence and grounded in the broader framework of toxic and abusive workplace behaviors, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between workplace gaslighting and burnout and turnover intention among Greek employees. Specifically, we hypothesize that workplace gaslighting will be positively associated with job burnout, which in turn will mediate the relationship between gaslighting and employees' intentions to leave their organizations.

Methods

Study design

A cross-sectional study was conducted in Greece using a convenience sample of 291 workers. Data collection took place in January 2025 through an online questionnaire developed in Google Forms, which was distributed

via professional groups on Facebook and Instagram. Eligible participants were individuals with at least one year of work experience. Sample size was estimated using G*Power v.3. 1. 9. 2. The models included resilience as the predictor and four potential confounders (gender, age, educational level, work experience). According to the anticipated effect size of 0.05 for the association between resilience and outcomes (workplace gaslighting, quiet quitting, and work engagement), a statistical power of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, the required sample size was estimated at 262 employees.

Ethical considerations

The study followed the Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) guidelines and was conducted in line with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki (Von Elm et al., 2008; World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki, 2013). Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Nursing, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (approval no. 15, December 9, 2024).

Measurements

Workplace gaslighting was assessed using the Gaslighting at Work Scale (GWS), an 11-item instrument rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) (Katsiroumpa et al., 2025a). The scale consists of two subscales: “loss of self-trust” (five items) and “abuse of power” (six items), with higher scores reflecting greater exposure to gaslighting behaviors. We used the validated Greek version of the GWS in the Greek language (Katsiroumpa et al., 2025a; Katsiroumpa et al., 2025b). In this study, internal consistency was excellent, with Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.945$ for the total scale, 0.918 for loss of self-trust, and 0.909 for abuse of power.

Job burnout was measured using the validated Greek version of the Single-Item Burnout Measure (SIBM), scored from 0 to 10, where higher values

indicate greater burnout, and turnover intention was measured with the question, “How often have you seriously considered leaving your current job?” . This question is a valid tool to measure turnover intention since the authors found high levels of reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Participants are asked to respond to a six-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from 1 (rarely) to 6 (extremely often) (Galanis et al., 2023b; Hansen & Pit, 2016; Spector et al., 1988).

Finally, the following demographic information was collected: gender (male or female), age (continuous variable), educational level (high school diploma, university degree, or MSc/PhD), and years of work experience (continuous variable).

Statistical analysis

Categorical variables are presented as numbers and percentages and continuous variables as mean, standard deviation (SD), median, maximum value, and minimum value. Workplace gaslighting was considered as the independent variable, job burnout and turnover intention as the dependent variables and demographic variables as potential confounders. Correlation between study scales was examined with Pearson’s correlation coefficient. To examine the impact of workplace gaslighting on job burnout and turnover intention, linear regression analysis was performed (independent variables followed normal distribution). First, we performed simple regression analysis, and then we constructed a final multivariable model by eliminating confounders to assess the independent effect of workplace gaslighting on job burnout and turnover intention. Variance inflation factors (VIFs) and tolerance values were calculated to assess multicollinearity in the multivariable models (Fox, 2005). In case of linear regression, unadjusted and adjusted coefficients beta, 95% confidence intervals (CI), and p-values are presented. Due to Pearson’s correlation coefficient being very high between age and work experience ($r = 0.883$, $p < 0.001$) and the

two GWS subscale scores ($r = 0.806$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$), we included total score on the GWS, instead of "loss of self-trust" and "abuse of power" scores, and work experience, instead of age, in the final multivariable models to avoid multicollinearity issues. The IBM SPSS 30.0 (IBM Corp. Released 2021. IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 30.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp) was used for the statistical analyses.

Results

Demographic characteristics

The study population included 291 workers. Most workers were females (77%), the mean age was 42.2 years ($SD = 10.3$) and 55.3% possessed a MSc/PhD diploma. Mean work experience was 16.7 years ($SD = 9.5$). Workers' demographic data are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Workers' demographic data (N=291).

Characteristic	N	%
Gender		
Males	67	23.0
Females	224	77.0
Age (years)^a	42.2	10.3
Educational level		

Characteristic	N	%
High school graduate	25	8.6
University graduate	105	36.1
MSc/PhD diploma	161	55.3
Work experience (years)^a	16.7	9.5

^a mean, standard deviation

Study scales

Descriptive statistics for the study scales are shown in Table 2. Levels of job burnout (mean value = 6.8) and turnover intention were high (mean value = 3.1), while mean score on GWS and “loss of self-trust” and “abuse of power” factors were 2.4, 2.1 and 2.7, respectively, reflecting moderate levels of gaslighting at the workplace.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the study scales (N=291).

Scale	Mean	Standard deviation	Median	Minimum value	Maximum value
Gaslighting at Work Scale	2,4	1,0	2,3	1,0	5,0
Loss of self-trust	2,1	1,0	2,0	1,0	5,0

Abuse of power	2,7	1,1	2,5	1,0	5,0
Job burnout	6,8	2,1	7,0	0,0	10,0
Turnover intention	3,1	1,6	3,0	1,0	6,0

Positive correlations were found between GWS and job burnout ($r = 0.230$, $p\text{-value} < 0.01$) and turnover intention ($r = 0.385$, $p\text{-value} < 0.01$). Similarly, we found positive correlations between scores on the “loss of self-trust” and “abuse of power” factors and job burnout ($r = 0.186$, $p\text{-value} < 0.01$ and $r = 0.244$, $p\text{-value} < 0.01$, respectively) and turnover intention ($r = 0.376$, $p\text{-value} < 0.01$ and $r = 0.357$, $p\text{-value} < 0.01$, respectively). Table 3 shows correlations between study scales.

Table 3. Correlation matrix between study scales.

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
1. Gaslighting at Work Scale		0.937*	0.962*	0.230*	0.385*
2. Loss of self-trust			0.806*	0.186*	0.376*
3. Abuse of power				0.244*	0.357*
4. Job burnout					0.480*
5. Turnover intention					

Values express Pearson's correlation coefficient.

* $p\text{-value} < 0.01$

Impact of workplace gaslighting on job burnout

Univariate analysis showed that workplace gaslighting was significantly associated with job burnout ($b = 0.499$, 95% CI = 0.255 - 0.748, $p < 0.001$). After adjusting for potential confounders in the multivariable model, the association was still significant and even stronger (adjusted $b = 0.616$, 95% CI = 0.466-0.765, $p < 0.001$). Multivariate model accounted for 13.5% of the variance in job burnout ($R^2 = 13.5\%$, $p < 0.001$) with no multicollinearity (tolerance = 0.987, VIF = 1.013). These results indicate a strong link between higher levels of workplace gaslighting and increased job burnout among employees. Table 4 presents the results of the linear regression analyses.

Table 4. Linear regression models with job burnout as the dependent variable and workplace gaslighting as the independent variable (N=291).

	Univariate models			Multivariable model ^a		
	Unadjusted coefficient beta	95% CI for beta	P-value	Adjusted coefficient beta	95% CI for beta	P-value
Workplace gaslighting	0.499	0.255 to 0.748	<0.001	0.616	0.466 to 0.765	<0.001

^a R^2 for the multivariable model = 5.8%, p-value for ANOVA = 0.002, tolerance value = 0.987 and VIF = 1.013

CI: confidence interval

Impact of workplace gaslighting on turnover intention

The linear regression results of the relationship between workplace gaslighting and turnover intention are presented in Table 5. In the univariate model, workplace gaslighting had a strong positive correlation with turnover intention ($b = 0.610$, 95% CI = 0.440–0.779, $p < 0.001$). This significant association persisted even after confounders correction in multivariable model (adjusted $b = 0.581$, 95% CI = 0.414–0.748, $p < 0.001$). The multivariable model accounted for 19.3% of the variation in turnover intention ($R^2 = 19.3\%$, $p < 0.001$) and no multicollinearity was detected based on the diagnostic tests (tolerance = 0.987, VIF = 1.013). The results indicate that the level of workplace gaslighting is significantly related to intentions to leave one's job.

Table 5. Linear regression models with turnover intention as the dependent variable and workplace gaslighting as the independent variable (N=291).

	Univariate models			Multivariable model ^a		
	Unadjusted coefficient beta	95% CI for beta	P-value	Adjusted coefficient beta	95% CI for beta	P-value
Workplace gaslighting	0.610	0.440 to 0.779	<0.001	0.581	0.414 to 0.748	<0.001

^a R^2 for the multivariable model = 19.3%, p-value for ANOVA < 0.001, tolerance value = 0.987 and VIF = 1.013

CI: confidence interval

Discussion

The present study provides robust evidence linking workplace gaslighting to heightened levels of job burnout and increased turnover intention among workers in Greece. These findings corroborate our initial hypotheses and highlight gaslighting as an emerging occupational hazard with profound implications for both employee well-being and organizational stability. The findings align, also, with prior research establishing a strong correlation between work-related stressors and turnover intentions, as well as job burnout and work stress (Galanis et al., 2023a; Salama et al., 2022).

Specifically, job burnout has been identified as a partial mediator between work stress and turnover intentions, indicating its critical role in exacerbating the decision to leave an organization (Salama et al., 2022). Moreover, other studies indicate that employees' emotional labor, particularly deep acting, can intensify job burnout, thereby elevating turnover intentions, while effective leader-member relationships can mitigate these adverse effects (Li et al., 2024). This study further expands upon these relationships by demonstrating that the insidious nature of gaslighting, characterized by emotional manipulation and psychological abuse, directly contributes to both job burnout and the propensity for employees to seek alternative employment (Salama et al., 2022; Üngüren et al., 2024). Previous studies in Greece have shown that workplace bullying, toxic leadership, and high workload are associated with increased emotional exhaustion and greater intentions to resign (Galanis et al., 2025a; Gkontelos et al., 2023). The present findings expand this line of evidence by showing

that gaslighting, a subtle yet insidious form of psychological abuse, has comparable, if not more severe, effects. Specifically, the significant associations observed between gaslighting and both job burnout and turnover intention align with earlier findings in nursing populations, where gaslighting was shown to predict similar outcomes (Moisoglou et al., 2025).

The practical implications of these findings are significant. Organizations that neglect to tackle gaslighting not only jeopardize the psychological well-being of their employees but also risk increased turnover rates, which can worsen staff shortages, diminish productivity, and undermine service quality. Interventions like leadership training, open communication, and the establishment of anti-harassment policies are essential for cultivating healthier organizational environments. Furthermore, research data from Greece showed that resilience protects workers from workplace gaslighting and quiet quitting and enhances their work engagement (Konstantakopoulou et al., 2025; Moisoglou et al., 2025). Finally, support systems such as confidential reporting channels and employee assistance programs may act as protective measures against the harmful effects of gaslighting.

During our study, we dealt with several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design of our study prevents us from establishing causal relationships, thereby limiting the ability to infer direct causality between workplace gaslighting and the observed outcomes of burnout and turnover intention. Secondly, the reliance on self-reported measures introduces the potential for common method bias, which could inflate the observed correlations between variables. The required sample was reached, but the sample was not a representative one, due to the use of convenience sampling which implies a selection bias. For example, the sample was predominately female so that would call for future research with prospective random sampling and other employee populations. In addition, as the research was performed within a European setting, research in other cultural contexts is needed to

clarify these relationships further. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs and incorporate multi-source data collection methods, such as peer or supervisor ratings, to mitigate these limitations and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic interplay between workplace gaslighting and its deleterious effects on employee well-being and organizational stability. Additionally, considering that organizational factors like inadequate staffing, prevalent in the Greek healthcare system, can exacerbate nurse burnout and turnover intention, future studies should investigate how such environmental stressors may interact with workplace gaslighting to further intensify these negative outcomes.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes workplace gaslighting as a concealed yet powerful factor contributing to burnout and the intention to leave among employees in Greece. By undermining self-confidence and heightening emotional fatigue, gaslighting adversely affects individual well-being and disrupts organizational effectiveness through higher employee turnover. It is crucial for organizations to identify and tackle gaslighting by establishing explicit policies, providing leadership training, and creating support systems to mitigate its impact. Addressing this insidious form of psychological abuse is not only an ethical obligation but also a strategic imperative to safeguard employees, bolster resilience, and maintain organizational sustainability.

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