

‘Under-Performing’ and ‘Performing’ High Schools: Work- engagement and Burnout amongst Educators

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Abstract— The study of Burnout and Engagement amongst educators in ‘under-performing’ and ‘performing’ high schools is critical as it affects their own well-being and throughput rate of their learners, who in turn provide the higher education institutions with first-year admission candidates. The study aimed to investigate the phenomena of burnout and engagement amongst educators in ‘Under-performing’ and ‘Performing’ High Schools. A cross-sectional survey was conducted amongst educators in ‘Under-performing’ and ‘Performing’ High Schools (n = 310) constituting a convenience sample. The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, together with a biographical questionnaire, was administered and found to be a valid and reliable instrument to measure the burnout and engagement of these participants. Two reliable factors, namely burnout and engagement, were extracted. Both categories of participants experienced burnout to some extent. Results from the study showed that participants from Under-Performing High Schools were found to be more cynical, while those in Performing High Schools were more exhausted. Work engagement was also found to be experienced by both categories of participants.

Keywords— Educators, Under-performing High Schools, Performing High Schools, Burnout, Engagement.

I. Introduction

The study of Burnout and Engagement amongst educators in ‘under-performing’ and ‘performing’ high schools is critical as it affects their own well-being and throughput rate of their learners, who in turn provide the higher education institutions with first-year admission candidates.

II. Problem investigated

Teaching is the one profession that makes all other professions possible (Zakaria, 2018). The investigation of burnout and engagement amongst educators (also known as teachers) in ‘under-performing’ and ‘performing’ high schools is bound to provide insight into their well-being, and subsequently the poor or excellent performance of the schools in which they serve, in turn being subsequently classified as such. Educator well-being is thus of supreme importance, since learners' accomplishments are profoundly associated with educator well-being (Tynjälä & Heikkinen, 2011).

Teaching is seen as an emotional profession and emotions are an essential part of educators' lives (Diener, 2012) However, it is an exceedingly emotionally draining occupation (Lambert, O'Donnell, Kusherman, & McCarthy, 2006; Martin, Dolmage, & Sharpe, 2012). Emotions influence educator conduct, well-being, and instruction, which consequently influences learner achievement and conduct (Fredrickson,

1998; Frenzel, 2014). When employees are emotionally exhausted, the level of achievement in employees declines, as a result causing burnout (Degenais-Desmerais & Savoie, 2012).

Educators are one of the professions who experience the highest degree of work demands (Stoerber & Rennert, 2008). International studies (European Commission, 2013; Van Horn, Schaufeli, & Enzmann, 1999) highlight inequity, low pay, limited promotion opportunities and chance for advancement as the highest causes of burnout. Research by Leiter and Maslach (2005) point to six specific sources of burnout at work: lack of control, values conflict, insufficient reward, work overload, unfairness and breakdown of community. Becker, Goetz, Morger, and Ranelluci (2014) indicate that the way educators feel about their jobs will thus influence the learners in the classroom.

The roles of instructors include: arranging and executing a scope of teaching programmes; providing a safe environment for learners; teaching learners according to the curriculum; observing, assessing and detailing progress of learners in key learning areas; implementing strategies to achieve learner outcomes; keeping up records of class participation and recording progress of learners; implementing learner management according to the school's strategic plan; participate in development as well as developing a professional portfolio (SACE, 2010).

Challenges faced by educators incorporate various inequalities experienced by the South African education framework before 1994 (NEPI, 1993). These inequalities brought about the inadequacy of black schools, bringing about the schools evolving into “dysfunctional” schools. “Dysfunctional” schools are situated in the poor neighbourhoods, lack capital and resources as well as overcrowded classes (Gallie, Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2010; Nkosi, 2012; Wolk, 1998), educator pay systems (Armstrong, 2009). Studies (Green & O'Sullivan, 2009; Shipengrower & Conway, 1998) indicate that these schools are occupied by, for the most part, black learners who are not conversant with English. Wilkinson (2015) argues that black learners living in poor neighbourhoods are going through hardships as a result of these “dysfunctional” schools, with the Minister of Basic Education, Me Angie Motshekga, pointing to 80% of these schools still being dysfunctional, with a Matric pass rate is less than 70%.

Changes in curricula have also compounded the challenges faced by the educators, resulting in weak educator content

knowledge in the new curriculum, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS; Moodley, 2013; Nkosi, 2012), introduced in 2012. What was successful in the old system was lost (Nkosi,2012:11). Educator unions, such as NAPTOSA and SADTU, have complained that there has not been sufficient correspondence and arrangement for the new curriculum, leading to hopelessness and frustration of educators.

Educator Post-Levels could also provide challenges with regard to actual staff teaching. As indicated by the Government Notices (2016), the fundamental obligations of educators and senior educators are to participate in class teaching; the Heads of Departments (HOD's) are, for the most part, in charge of the functioning of the school and developing additional curricular activities in order to guarantee that the education of the learners is advanced in an appropriate way. The principals and senior principals are in charge of the administrative strategies and procedures of activities and functions of the schools.

This occupation has the most noticeable rate of turnover, when contrasted with different occupations (Minarik, Thornton, & Perreault, 2003; Shuck, Ghosh, Zigarmi, & Nimon, 2013; Wang & Bird, 2011), with the Learning Policy Institute putting it at twice the rate of other professions (Zakaria, 2018). The high turnover rate of educators could be an indicator of educators experiencing burnout rather than work engagement. In South Africa in particular, , in the year 2015 the Government Pensions Administration Agency (GPAA) recorded 4 600 resignations in South Africa Sello (2015). The rest of the educators that remained in the system were more inclined to burnout, and decreased work engagement in view of the resultant shortage of educators (Sello, 2015).

iii. Literature review

The challenges in the Department of Basic Education (DBE) outlined above are bound to have an influence on the experience of burnout and engagement amongst educators in the Department of Basic Education (DBE).

Teaching is, to a great degree, a physical and emotional strenuous profession, since educators offer direct assistance to learners and indirect assistance to the society (McCormick, 2011). The educators are inevitably exposed to impractical expectations, such as being disciplinarians, while meeting a variety of learner needs (Baldwin, Lunceford, & Vanderlinden, 2005; Purvanova & Muros, 2010). Studies (Brouwers, Tomic, & Boluijt, 2011) indicate that the endeavour of educators attempting to accomplish these expectations may prompt burnout, which may bring about unending ailments. Consequently, these ailments prompt

educators to become less productive in class, which in turn may encourage educators to leave the profession prematurely (Harrington & Hunt, 2010; Hogan & McKnight, 2007).When educators encounter burnout, it lessens their personal satisfaction and furthermore negatively affects their family life (Connor, Morrison, Fishman, Ponitz, Glasney, Underwood, & Schatschneider, 2009; Hellesoy, Gronhaug, & Kvitastein, 2000), and their learners.

Burnout influences educators' achievement and dedication, which thus prompts a decrease in the quality of teaching and has a negative impact on educators' achievement (Blandford, 2000). Burnout has assorted negative impacts on educators; these impacts include: poor interpersonal relationships with colleagues, low morale and less sensitivity towards the challenges of learners, less tolerance of classroom disturbances and less classroom lesson planning (Demaray, Malecki, Rueger, Brown, & Summers, 2009; Lynch, 2016). These behaviours have motivated the development of literature on burnout and work engagement of employees, including educators (Fernet, Guay, Senectal, & Austin, 2012).

Findings from previous studies in different countries have pointed to burnout being negatively related to work engagement (Demerouti, Bakker, De Jonge, Janssen, & Schaufeli, 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). Burnout is characterised by employees continually experiencing exhaustion and having a cynical view towards work; these employees eventually encounter serious medical issues and a decline in work performance (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014).

Several studies have been done on the engagement phenomena. Employees who are engaged indicate greater levels of customer satisfaction and achieve more during work, bringing about more profit for the organization (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Work engagement can affect work attitudes, since it includes emotional behavior (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010:91-127).Work engagement has been characterized as the enthusiasm an employee has towards the job. Engaged educators, therefore, are resilient, vigorous, enthusiastic and optimistic about the work and are very often immersed in that work (Kirkpatrick, 2007).

The relationship between burnout and work engagement has been researched among a variety of occupations, including educators. Work engagement of educators is imperative as it mirrors the educators' enthusiasm, interest and eagerness for their job (Van Beek, Hu, Schaufeli, Taris, & Schreurs, 2012). Burnout should also be determined as it mirrors the emotional exhaustion, which is the consequence of stress, in individuals who are in contact with other individuals professionally (Betoret & Artiga, 2010).

A. *Measurement of Student Burnout and Engagement*

The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI; Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou, & Kantas, 2003), which is used in this study to measure both burnout and engagement, has been developed by Demerouti and Ebbinghaus (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2000). The OLBI has been designed for use in all kinds of occupations. The OLBI has been originally designed to measure burnout, but has been subsequently validated to be measuring both burnout and engagement; the negatively and positively worded items of the scale being the catalysts in this development (Qiao & Schaufeli, 2011). Four subscales, exhaustion and cynicism measuring burnout and vigour and dedication measuring engagement, exist in the OLBI. For the purpose of this study the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) (Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou, & Kantas, 2003) is used as an instrument.

B. *Research aims and hypotheses*

In view of the reasons outlined above, the study aimed to investigate the phenomena of burnout and engagement amongst educators in ‘Under-performing’ and ‘Performing’ High Schools. The following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 1

Burnout is negatively related to work engagement in Under-Performing High Schools.

Hypothesis 2

Burnout is negatively related to work engagement in Performing High Schools

Hypothesis 3

Educators in Under- Performing High Schools do not experience work engagement.

Hypothesis 4

Educators in Performing High Schools experience work engagement.

Hypothesis 5

Educators in Under-Performing High Schools experience burnout.

Hypothesis 6

Educators in Performing High Schools do not experience burnout.

iv. Method

A. *Participants*

A quantitative approach (Creswell, 2009) was adopted in this study. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with educators from ‘under-performing’ and ‘performing’ High

schools in South Africa (n = 310) constituting a convenience sample. The characteristics of the participants are provided in Table 1.

ITEM	CATEGORY	UNDER= PERFORMING	PERFORMING SCHOOLS (%)
Gender	Male	41.10	33.55
	Female	58.90	66.45
Age	18-27	20.55	26.45
	28-37	10.96	18.06
	38-47	32.19	27.74
	48-57	32.19	20.00
	58 and older	4.11	7.74
Marital status	Single	33.56	38.06
	Married	53.42	52.90
	Divorced	8.22	7.10
	Separated	2.06	0.65
	Widowed	2.74	1.29
Race	Black	84.25	32.90
	White	7.53	58.13
	Coloured	7.53	5.81
	Indian	0.69	5.16
Highest educational	Educator Certificates	4.80	2.58
	Post-Matric	13.01	12.90
	Degree	35.62	45.16
	Honours	42.47	32.90
	Masters	4.11	5.81
	PhD	0.65	0.00
Job Title	Educator	76.03	74.84
	Snr Education	9.59	12.90
	HOD	10.96	9.68
	Principal	3.43	1.29
	Snr Principal	0.00	1.90
	Post Level	Level 1	82.19
	Level 2	12.33	10.97
	Level 3	4.11	2.58
	Level 4	13.70	2.58
Period of	1-5 Years	22.60	30.97
	6-10 Years	12.33	11.61
	11-15 Years	15.07	17.42
	16-20 Years	16.44	14.19
	21-25 Years	20.55	11.61
	26 Years & Above	13.01	14.19
Period of	1-5 Years	36.30	43.87
	6-10 Years	21.92	20.00
	11-15 Years	8.22	14.19
	16-20 Years	13.01	12.26
	21-25 Years	11.64	5.81
	26 Years & Above	8.90	3.87
No. of Learners	21-30	2.06	30.32

	31-40	54.11	48.39
	41-50	27.40	20.65
	51-60	9.59	0.00
	61 and Above	6.85	0.65
ITEM	CATEGORY	UNDER=PERFORMING	PERFORMING SCHOOLS (%)
No. of Matric	None Subject	35.62	36.77
	1 Subject	30.14	36.77
	2 Subjects	28.08	21.29
	3 Subjects	6.16	4.52
	4 Subjects	0.00	0.65
No. of Non-	None	20.55	10.32
	1	24.66	30.32
	2	26.71	29.68
	3	18.49	21.94
	4	6.85	5.81
	5	2.74	1.94
No. of Matric	None	34.93	36.13
	1	13.01	12.90
	2	24.66	26.45
	3	13.70	7.74
	4	10.27	12.26
	5	1.37	1.29
	6	2.06	3.23
No. of Non-	None	22.60	10.97
	1	4.80	3.23
	2	23.29	18.06
	3	13.01	19.35
	4	15.75	14.84
	5	8.90	9.68
	6	11.64	23.87

Table 1: Characteristics of the Participants

B. Instruments

The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2000) was used in this study to measure burnout and engagement among educators in ‘Under-performing’ and ‘performing’ high schools in South Africa. A six-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) was used. Both positive and negative items are used in this instrument. Burnout was measured by 10 items, for example, “I feel tired when I get up in the morning and I have to face another day at work”. Engagement was measured by 10 items, for example, “I like my job so much that I cannot imagine another occupation for myself”.

A biographical questionnaire was used in this study to investigate demographical factors that have a bearing on the burnout and engagement of educators in Under-Performing and Performing High Schools. Personal data was required on the gender, age, marital status, race, highest educational qualifications. Both the job title and post level indicated their position in the hierarchy of the school system. Tenure was indicated through the period of service in the Department of

Education and in the current school. To indicate workload, participants indicated the number of learners in one’s class, number of subjects taught in Matric Grades 10-12) and non-Matric (i.e. grade nine and below) classes, number of Matric and non-matric classes taught.

C. Procedure

From the list of Under-Performing (seven) and Performing (17) High Schools from the Statistics Department of the Department of Education, an equal number (seven each) of Under-Performing High schools and Performing High Schools participated in the study, with all under-performing schools and 41.2% of the Performing Schools being included. According to Grinnel & Williams (1990), a 10% sample ought to be adequate for controlling sampling errors.

All of the educators who were approached and agreed to participate in the study completed the self-reporting questionnaires. Participants were fully informed regarding the procedure, goal and outcomes of the study. A convenience sample was thus used in this study. A total number of 301 (N=301) educators participated in the study. Approval for the study was granted by the Ethics Committee of the North-West University.

D. Data analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS;IBM Corp SPSS, 2015: version 22.0) was utilised for the analysis of data. Descriptive statistics were computed to describe the data. The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) respectively.(Brown, 2015) was executed to test the validity of the constructs measured in this study. An assessment of the relationship between burnout and work engagement was also done, using the Pearson’s correlation analysis (Sharma, 2012). Results were first analysed for statistical significance using Wilk’s Lambda statistics.

v. Findings

A. Measurement of burnout and engagement

The OLBI has been found to be a reliable and valid measure of burnout and engagement in the work context (Halbesleben & Demerouti, 2005). In this study, all reliability analyses results, using Cronbach’s alpha (Johnson & Christensen, 2013), confirmed that the OLBI is reliable for educators in both Under-Performing (burnout=.910; engagement=.903) and Performing (burnout=.895; engagement=.867) High Schools, which can be regarded as excellent (>0.75;Leung, 2001:84).The study used exploratory factor analysis to explore possible factors leading to burnout and work engagement in Under-Performing (KMO = 0.92; p-

value = <0.05) and Performing High Schools (KMO = 0.92; p-value = <0.05); both KMOs are greater than the benchmark of 0.7, indicating sufficient items for each factor (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2014:73). All Pearson correlation coefficients are interpreted based on the following criteria adopted from Weinberg and Abramowitz (2016:152): $r \geq 0.5$ are considered strong; $r = 0.3 \leq$ and < 0.5 are considered moderate; $r = 0.1 \leq$ but < 0.3 are considered weak. The * and the ** in the Pearson correlation tables and the path diagrams below indicate that the relationships are significant up to 5% and 1%, respectively.

B. Hypotheses results

The results of the hypotheses of the study are presented:

Hypothesis 1: Burnout is negatively related to work engagement in Under-Performing High Schools

The relationship between burnout and work engagement in Under-Performing High Schools is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 The Pearson Correlation between burnout and work engagement in Under-Performing High Schools

	vigour (engagement-factor1.1)	dedication (engagement-factor1.2)
exhaustion (burnout-factor1.1)	-.538**	-.216**
	p-value=0.00	p-value=0.009
cynicism (Burnout-factor1.2)	-.276**	-.196*
	p-value=0.001	p-value=0.018

Table 2 shows that there is a strong, negative relationship between exhaustion and vigour (-0.54; p-value=0.00) in Under-Performing High Schools. A weak, negative relationship between exhaustion and dedication (-0.22; p-value=0.01) also exists. There are also weak, negative relationships between cynicism and the following factors: vigour (-0.28; p-value =0.0) and dedication (-0.20; p-value=0.02). Statistically significant relationships up to the 5% level of significance have been established. Hypothesis 1 is therefore accepted.

The relationships are indicated in the path diagram (Figure 1) below.

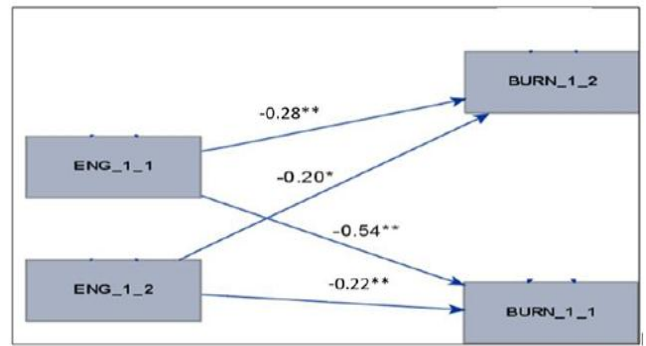


Figure 1: A path diagram showing the relationships between burnout factors and work engagement factors in Under-Performing High Schools.

*=Significant up to 5%

**=Significant up to 1%

Hypothesis 2: Burnout is negatively related to work engagement in Performing High Schools.

The relationship between burnout and work engagement in Performing High Schools is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: The Pearson Correlation between burnout and work engagement in Performing High Schools

	vigour (engagement-factor2.1)	dedication (engagement-factor2.2)
exhaustion (burnout-factor2.1)	-.236**	-.208**
	p-value=0.00	p-value=0.009
cynicism (burnout-factor2.2)	-.564**	-.151
	p-value=0.00	p-value=0.060

Table 3 shows that there is a strong, negative relationship between cynicism and vigour (-0.54; p-value=0.00) in Performing High Schools. Also there are weak, negative relationships between exhaustion and the following variables: vigour (-0.24; p-value=0.00) and dedication (-0.21; p-value=0.01). All three relationships are statistically significant up to the 5% level of significance. Hypothesis 2 is therefore accepted. The significant correlations are indicated in the path diagram (Figure 2) below:

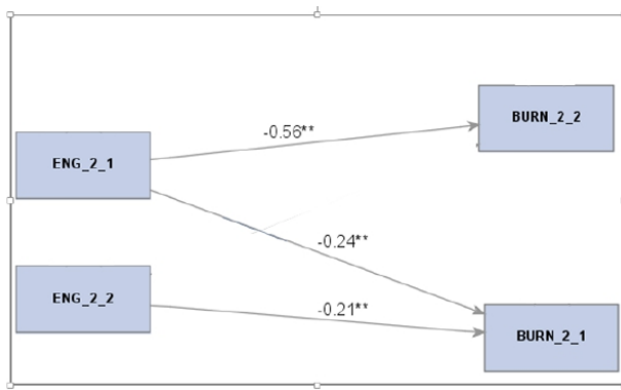


Figure 2: A path diagram showing the relationships between burnout factors and work engagement factors in Performing High Schools

*=Significant up to 5%
 **=Significant up to 1%

The negative relationship between cynicism and dedication (-0.15; p-value=0.06) is not included in the path diagram because it is not statistically significant up to the 5% level of significance.

Hypothesis 3: Educators in Under- Performing High Schools do not experience work engagement.

The work engagement of participants in Under-Performing High Schools is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: The work-engagement of Under-Performing High Schools

		Disagree	Agree
vigour (engagement-factor1.1)	I always find new and interesting aspects in my job	42.50%	57.50%
	I can cope with the pressure of my job very well	32.90%	67.10%
	I find my job to be full of meaning and purpose	30.10%	69.90%
	I usually have enough energy for leisure activities after work	54.10%	45.90%
	I can usually manage my work load well	35.60%	64.40%
	Average Percentage	39.04%	60.96%
dedication (engagement-factor1.2)	I like my job so much that I cannot imagine another occupation for myself	43.80%	56.20%
	I usually feel energised when I work	36.30%	63.70%

I feel more and more engaged in my work	34.20%	65.80%
My job inspires me	36.30%	63.70%
I'm enthusiastic about my job	32.90%	67.10%
Average Percentage	36.70%	63.30%

Table 4 shows that in Under-Performing High Schools the majority of the participants experience vigour, as they find the job to be full of meaning and purpose (69.90%), cope with the pressure of the job (67.10%) and manage workload (64.40%) very well, although they do not have enough energy for leisure activities after work (54.10%). Most of the participants experience dedication, as they are enthusiastic about the job (67.10%), feel more and more engaged in their work (65.80%) and feel energised and inspired by the job (63.70%). Generally, more than average of participants in Under-Performing High Schools experience vigour (60.96%) and dedication (63.30%). Hypothesis 8 is therefore rejected for Under-Performing High Schools.

Hypothesis 4: Educators in Performing High Schools experience work engagement.

The work engagement of participants in Performing High Schools is presented in the Table 5 Below.

Table 5: The work engagement of Performing High Schools

		Disagree	Agree
vigour (work engagement-factor2.1)	I can cope with the pressure of my job very well	20.60%	79.40%
	I usually have enough energy for leisure activities after work	53.50%	46.50%
	I can usually manage my work load well	18.70%	81.30%
	Average Percentage	30.93%	69.07%
dedication (work engagement-factor2.2)	I always find new and interesting aspects in my job	30.10%	69.90%
	I find my job to be full of meaning and purpose	43.80%	56.20%
	I like my job so much that I cannot imagine another occupation for myself	34.20%	65.80%
	I feel more and more engaged in my work	36.30%	63.70%
	My job inspires me	32.90%	67.10%
	I'm enthusiastic about my job	35.46%	64.54%
	I usually feel energised when I work	36.30%	63.70%

	Average Percentage	35.58%	64.42%
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Table 5 shows that in Performing High Schools, the majority of the participants experience vigour, as the participants cope with pressure of their job very well (79.40%) and usually manage their work load well (81.30%), although slightly more than average usually do not have enough energy for leisure activities after work (53.50%). A majority of the participants also experience dedication, as the job offers them new and interesting aspects within the job (69.90%), the job inspires them (67.10%) and they cannot imagine working in another occupation (65.80%). Generally, more than half of the participants in Performing High Schools in this study experience vigour (69.07%) and dedication (64.42%). Hypothesis 4 is accepted for Performing High Schools.

Hypothesis 5: Educators in Under-Performing High Schools experience burnout.

The burnout of participants in Under-Performing High schools is presented in the table below.

Table 6: The burnout of Under-Performing High Schools

		Disagree	Agree
exhaustion (burnout factor1.1)	I feel tired when I get up in the morning and I have to face another day at work	52.30%	47.70%
	It happens more and more that I talk about my job in a negative way	62.60%	37.40%
	Lately, I tend to think less about my job; I do it almost mechanically	53.50%	46.50%
	I feel emotionally drained by my work	42.60%	57.40%
	Over time, I have lost personal interest in my work	54.20%	45.80%
	I have become less enthusiastic about my work	52.90%	47.10%
	I sometimes really hate the tasks I have to do in my job	62.60%	37.40%
	Average	54.39%	45.61%
cynicism (burnout factor1.2)	I need more time to feel better after work on a day than I did in the past	32.90%	67.10%
	I experience my work as a real challenge	45.20%	54.80%
	I usually feel worn-out and tired after my work	36.10%	63.90%
	Average percentage	38.07%	61.93%

Table 6 shows that although participants in Under-Performing High Schools experience exhaustion, as a majority feel emotionally drained by work (57.40%), they are not negative about the job (62.60%) and do not hate the task they have to do in the job (62.60%). More than average of participants in Under-Performing High Schools experience cynicism as the participants need more time to feel better after work on a day than they did in the past (67.10%), usually feel worn-out and tired after work (63.90%) and experience work as a real challenge (54.80%). Generally, most of the participants experience more cynicism (61.93%) than they do exhaustion (45.61%). Hypothesis 5 is therefore partially accepted for Under- Performing High Schools.

Hypothesis 6: Educators in Performing High Schools do not experience burnout.

The burnout of participants in Performing High Schools is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: The burnout of Performing High Schools

		Disagr	Agree
exhaustion (burnout factor 2.1)	I feel tired when I get up in the morning and I have to face another day at work	53.20%	46.80%
	Lately, I tend to think less about my job; I do almost mechanically	53.50%	46.50%
	I feel emotionally drained by my work	45.80%	54.20%
	I experience my work as a real challenge	43.90%	56.10%
	I usually feel worn-out and tired after my work	36.20%	63.80%
	Average Percentage	46.52%	53.48%
cynicism (burnout factor 2.2)	It happens more and more that I talk about my job in a negative way	64.10%	35.90%
	I need more time to feel better after work on a day than I did in the past	36.20%	63.80%
	Over time, I have lost personal interest in my work	56.50%	43.50%
	I sometimes really hate the tasks I have to do in my job	61.10%	38.90%
	I have become less enthusiastic about my work	57.80%	42.20%
Average Percentage	55.14%	44.86%	

Table 7 shows that in Performing High Schools slightly more than average experience exhaustion, as the participants usually feel worn-out and tired after work (63.80%), experience work as a real challenge (56.10%) and feel emotionally drained (54.20%), although the participants do not feel tired when having to go to work (53.20%) and do not do their work mechanically (53.50%). Less than average of the participants experience cynicism, as they need more time to feel better after work on a day than they did in the past (63.80%), although the majority of the participants talk about their job in a positive way (64.10%) and are more enthusiastic about the job (57.80%). Slightly more than half (53.48%) of the participants in Performing High Schools in this study experience exhaustion but fewer (44.86%) are cynical. Hypothesis 6 is therefore partially accepted for Performing High Schools.

C. Demographic variables on burnout and engagement

Demographic variables such as age, gender, academic qualifications, period of tenure, as well as the workload have a bearing on burnout and engagement.

Age has its role on the burnout of participants in this study. Most participants in Under-Performing High Schools had an age range of between 38 and 57, followed by those with 18-27 years of age. Alufohai & Ibhafidon (2015) found that as educators age, they progress toward experiencing burnout and a mental state of criticism while some studies are in contradiction, indicating that the younger educators are more receptive to burnout (Antoniou, Polychroni, & Walters, 2000).

Both Under-Performing and Performing High Schools have most participants serving in the Department of Education for 5 or less years. Ghorpade, Lackritz, & Singh, 2007:240-256 indicate that the plausible cause behind finding work as a challenge incorporates an absence of abilities to manage regular issues emerging in the working environment, a "reality shock." This suggestion, when viewed with the larger classes in Under-Performing High Schools, could explain the status quo of this category. In bigger classes, additional time is required for non-scholarly exercises identified as disciplining and controlling learners in class; educators are then obstructed from covering the entire curriculum in time (Pedder, 2006). Furthermore, being overtaxed with classes has adverse effects on educator engagement and confidence (Fin, 2003).

Gender has its role on the burnout of participants in this study. Both Under-Performing and Performing High Schools have more females than males. Studies affirmed that females are less inclined to burnout, compared to their male colleagues (Agrawal, 2003), female educators are more encouraging and sympathetic (Rashidi & Naderi, 2012), and caring (Wood, 2012). This suggestion should explain why, even with large classes, several subjects and classes taught, the educators could still experience work engagement.

Academic qualifications have their role on the burnout of participants in this study. Most of

the participants in both Under-Performing and Performing High Schools are graduates. As some educators started teaching while they only had Educator Certificates, the necessity to advance their studies while also working, could consequently lead to educator burnout.

Marital status has its role on the work engagement of participants in this study. Most of the participants in both Under-Performing and Performing High Schools are married. Married educators have been found to experience higher work engagement than those separated or divorced (Kong, 2005). According to Alufohai and Ibhafidon (2015), educators who were married had a positive influence on the academic achievement of learners.

VI. Conclusions

The study aimed to investigate the phenomena of burnout and engagement amongst educators in ‘Under-performing’ and ‘Performing’ High Schools. To this end, the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, used in this study, was found to be a valid and reliable instrument to measure the burnout and engagement of educators in ‘Under-performing’ and ‘Performing’ High Schools. The negative relationship between burnout and work engagement was found to exist for both categories of schools. Both categories of participants experienced burnout to some extent. Exhaustion has been found to be frequent amongst educators, while cynicism had a tendency to be sensibly low (Makikangas, Feldt, Kinnunen, and Tolvanen, 2011). Results from the study showed that participants from Under-Performing High Schools were found to be more cynical, while those in Performing High Schools were more exhausted. Work engagement was also found to be experienced by both categories of participants: the main contributors for the participants from Under-Performing High Schools being “finding their jobs to be full of meaning and purpose” (as in Bay, An, and Laguardor, 2014) inspires them to be enthusiastic about their jobs, while participants from Performing High Schools “manage their workload well”, thereby always finding new and interesting ways to do their jobs.

This study is not without limitations. This study is cross-sectional and thus provides data only at a particular time. A longitudinal study should provide more insight into the phenomena. A quantitative approach was also used in the study. For future purposes, a qualitative study should be engaged, as participants could provide more meaning and insight into what the educators’s workload and work-life balance entails.

VII. Significance

This is the first study to investigate the well-being and job satisfaction of educators in

Under-Performing and Performing high schools in an area of South Africa, using the OLBI

VIII. Managerial implications/Recommendations

Based on the findings in this research, the following recommendations can be developed to reduce the cynicism and exhaustion in Under-Performing and Performing High Schools: Include educators in decision-making; allow educators significant independence and flexibility in planning the work and in deciding the methodology to be utilized; Invest in projects and equipment that are sports-related to motivate learners and educators in physical education training to enhance their mental well-being and physical health;

introduce work hours that are flexible, stress-management programmes, as well as continual professional development opportunities geared to career advancement characterised by the introduction of additional post levels. Furthermore, establish a clear focus and a strategic framework of core beliefs, effective practices and goals for improving learner achievement.

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“The way educators feel about their jobs will influence the learners in the classroom.”



Dr Revelation Mokgele,
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“Teaching is the one profession that makes all other professions possible (Zakaria, 2018).”