



INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND JOB BURNOUT OF NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS: THE MEDIATING AND MODERATING ROLE OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Institutional leaders also play a vital role in providing resources and support to employees. By ensuring that employees have access to the necessary tools, training, and support. Leaders set the stage for employees to be successful in their roles. The present investigation attempts to determine the role of institutional leadership (IL) in the job burnout (JB) of newly qualified teachers. This study also evaluates the mediating role of work engagement (WE) and moderating role of professional development (PD). This study tested the hypothesis using a partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) by applying smart PLS software. A total of 138 teachers from selected Districts in the Limpopo Province were targeted for data collection. The results confirmed that IL positively impacts JB. The results validate the mediating role of WE. The moderating results revealed that PD does not play a moderating role in proposed relationships. This study serves the existing body of literature by providing empirical evidence on the significance of IL.

Keywords: *Institutional leadership, Job burnout, Work engagement, Professional development, Stewardship theory*

1. INTRODUCTION

Proper leadership may steer institutions towards realising their objectives. Dunn (2016) defines leadership as "the process of influencing people to direct their efforts towards the achievement of some specific goal or goals." He goes on to say that corporate governance can refer to leadership, institutional structures, and processes, all of which aid an organisation in sustaining and expanding its goals. According to Wheatley (2011), leadership has a clear cause and effect relationship with institutions. In this view, the objectives include the culture, policies, procedures, and controls that help ensure a company's business goals are met. Leadership styles have an impact on how all employees perform in an organisation.

According to Chuang (2013), effective leadership motivates subordinates to improve their efficiency while also fulfilling their goals. According to Ngaithe (2016), knowing the effects of leadership on performance is critical since it is viewed as a potential source of management growth. The emotional and behavioural tiredness generated by the long hours and high-intensity nature of the everyday teaching process is referred to as teacher work burnout (Wu et al., 2016). Teachers have more psychological stress and burnout than other vocations (Ouellette et al., 2018; Fathi et al., 2021). Job burnout not only has a direct impact on teaching quality and teachers' physical and mental health (Domitrovich et al., 2016; Capone & Petrillo, 2018), but it also has a detrimental impact on students' academic progress and social behaviour (Klusmann et al., 2016; Madigan & Kim, 2021). Exploration of the generating process and influencing variables of job burnout can

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Khutso Pitso Mankgele, Mahunele Thotse, Mpho Mokgaetji Chidi

thus not only relieve instructors' mental health problems, but also indirectly increase students' mental health and academic advancement (Zhao et al., 2022). Previous studies relating to institutional leadership, job burnout, work engagement to work burnout, job satisfaction, and the intention to quit in the teaching profession have, however, not focused their attention on newly qualified teachers, who are identified as being most at risk in quitting the profession (Chen et al., 2020; Madigan & Kim, 2021).

However, to curb the attrition of not just newly qualified teachers, but old teachers who might also wish to get out of the system earlier, the Limpopo Department of Basic Education has since 2014 partnered with the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) to implement various interventions to advance teacher professionalism, district, and school management as well as community involvement. To enhance the partnership a District Improvement Programme (DIP) was established through which the NECT is implementing its interventions. The DIP is supposed to be facilitated through District Steering Committees (DSCs), which unfortunately in selected Districts in the Limpopo Province was only established in 2023. The DSCs comprise among other stakeholder representatives, of teacher unions, School Governing Bodies (SGBs), local businesses, youth organisations and district officials. Whereas teacher professionalisation is one of six thematic focal points guiding the NECT's work, not much has been reported on the support of specifically newly qualified teachers so that they are anchored. A Fact Sheet (2023) on the 10th Anniversary Provincial Dialogue between the two partners shows that 29 474 teachers were trained, though.

Previous studies have extensively explored the relationship between institutional leadership and job burnout among teachers. According to a study conducted by Neuhoff (2023), inadequate leadership styles and ineffective communication were significant predictors of teacher burnout. Similarly, Nygaard (2019) found that lack of support from school leaders increased the likelihood of teacher burnout. These findings demonstrate the crucial role of institutional leadership in influencing teacher well-being and highlight the importance of effective leadership practices in mitigating job burnout (Nygaard, 2019; Neuhoff, 2023). The background of the study is crucial for understanding the context and motivation behind this research. According to Madigan and Kim (2021), job burnout among newly qualified teachers is a pervasive issue, with detrimental effects on both the individuals and their institutions. Additionally, Hilton, Hilton, Dole and Goos (2015) assert that leadership within educational institutions plays a significant role in the work engagement and professional development of teachers. This study aims to investigate the mediating and moderating role of work engagement and professional development in the relationship between institutional leadership and job burnout among newly qualified teachers in the selected Districts in the Limpopo Province. Understanding these factors can inform strategies to mitigate job burnout and promote the well-being and effectiveness of teachers in this specific context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical background

Stewardship theory finds a strong relationship between stewards and the success or the performance of the firm and therefore the stewards protect the institution and maximise the performance (Gordon, 2017) and try to satisfy most of the stakeholder groups in an institution. Stewardship theory makes three key assumptions in regard to institutional leadership and organisational survival. According to Davis, Schoorman and Donaldson (1997), institutional leadership should revolve around the capacity of leading individuals



within the organisation to manage the organisation in a manner that secures its long-term viability. This leadership role necessitates acceptance of management by members of an organisation (Davis et al., 1997). Stewardship theory identifies a significant association between stewards and company success or performance, and thus stewards defend the institution and optimise performance while attempting to satisfy the majority of stakeholder groups in an institution (Gordon, 2017). In terms of institutional leadership and organisational longevity, stewardship theory makes three fundamental assumptions. Institutional leadership, according to Davis et al. (1997), should focus on the ability of senior individuals inside the organisation to manage the organisation in a way that ensures its long-term viability. Acceptance of management by members of an organisation is required for this leadership function (Davis et al., 1997).

Empirical literature

Institutional leadership and job burnout

Leaders are increasingly taking on the role of the organisation's symbol and have an immense effect on its survival and growth (Askeland, 2020). Leadership is defined by Malik and Azmat (2019) as the process of strengthening, influencing, and motivating employees to complete and reach organisational objectives. Additionally, the leadership styles and abilities of the leader have a major role in motivating the workforce. Therefore, leadership is crucial for comprehending how work values affect development, expanding the notion of institutional leadership (Askeland, 2020). According to Jianghong and Ge Jing (2020) Institutional leadership is "the process and outcomes that leaders use to establish leadership into organisational structures through organisational work. This can make the structures the source of leadership, lessen the instability of individual leadership, and achieve the sustainable and stable development of the organisation".

Burnout is a damaging mental health illness associated with the workplace that affects people who have never had a history of psychological disorders (Dzau et al., 2018). In addition, it is frequently used to denote work-related stress and can be viewed as an occupational hazard that could have an impact on a person's emotional and professional well-being (DeMatthews et al., 2021). Li, Ju, Kong, and Jiang (2023) define burnout as a prevalent behavioural sign that indicates teachers' low job satisfaction, reduced anticipation, lack of interest in work, emotional detachment, and lack of interest as a result of ongoing workplace stress. Teaching is the profession most likely to produce workers who suffer burnout due to the high levels of stress brought on by the high emotional demands in the field of education (Fiorilli et al., 2017). Teacher burnout frequently occurs progressively when resources such as principal leadership and engagements are drained, and stress levels rise (Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021).

In literature there is sparse research on the relationship between institutional leadership and job teacher burnout of new teachers in schools. Previous studies emphasized various leadership styles and teacher burnout. Others have shown that, principal instructional leadership (He, 2020), integrity leadership (Mao & Tang, 2016), and emotional leadership (Jinkyung & Jinhee, 2019) are all negatively associated to teacher burnout. Tian, Mao, and Xiong (2021) further revealed that transformational leadership can directly predict teacher burnout, and there is a significant negative association between the two. Mi (2017) discovered that transformational leadership is associated with teacher burnout. According to Li et al. (2023) spiritual leadership of principals has a strong detrimental effect on schoolteachers' burnout. Moreover, the spiritual leadership of principals was found to have a negative impact on teacher burnout through emotional intelligence mediation. Küçükgöz, (2021) also revealed a negative association between

INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND JOB BURNOUT OF NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS: THE MEDIATING AND MODERATING ROLE OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Khutso Pitso Mankgele, Mahunele Thotse, Mpho Mokgaetji Chidi

teachers' paternalist leadership perceptions and burnout. Accordingly, it can be said that the principal's paternal leadership abilities towards the teacher reduces teachers' job burnout (Gökdeniz et al., 2018). Since there is sparse literature on the relationship between institutional leadership and job burnout of newly qualified teachers, there is a need to warrant further in-depth exploration hence we hypothesize that:

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between Institutional leadership and job burnout.

Institutional leadership and work engagement

Work engagement is defined as a high level of enthusiasm, motivation, commitment, and strong concentration on one's activity (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Eldor, Harpaz, and Westman (2020) define work engagement as a positive view and a strong attachment to one's work obligations and tasks; particularly, when employees are actively involved in their job duties, they exhibit eagerness, higher devotion, and focus. According to Zahed-Babelan, Koulaei, Moeinikia, and Sharif (2019), the relationship between leadership behaviours and work engagement is largely unexplored, particularly in schools. Leadership studies have revealed that several leadership styles are clearly associated with work engagement. The study of Zahed-Babelan et al. (2019) confirms that there is a favourable relationship between instructional leadership and work engagement, however the direct relationship is non-significant.

Rowold, Diebig, and Heinitz (2017) discovered that influential leadership has a greater impact on staff engagement through fostering work resources. Riffat-un-Nisa and Parveen (2014) reported that there is a substantial positive association between school leaders' leadership styles and teachers' work engagement. They found that school leaders' leadership styles and teachers' work engagement are related, and that a change in school leaders' leadership style results in a change in teachers' job engagement. According to Zeng and Xu's (2020) research, ethical leadership is strongly and positively associated to job engagement. The findings indicate that young teachers of ethical leaders gain trust in the organisation and, as a result, actively engage in their work. Ahmad and Gao (2018) provide support as their study found that ethical leadership behaviours have a positive impact on subordinates' work engagement. A gap remains in understanding the relationship between institutional leadership and work engagement of new teachers as such, the study posits the following hypothesis:

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between institutional leadership and work engagement.

Work engagement and job burnout

The capacity to successfully deal with the unpleasant feelings brought on by job burnout is a characteristic shared by highly engaged employees. A worker's level of engagement at work may decline due to job burnout, which may lead to inefficient working procedures and low output (Chen et al., 2022). According to Fiorilli, Benevene, De Stasio, Buonomo, IRomano, Pepe and Addimando (2019) burnout is a result of teachers feeling powerless to handle the stresses and challenges involved with regular school activities. Burned-out teachers lack the emotional stamina and energy to devote to school-life concerns (Ho et al, 2015). Previous studies found that teachers exhibit increasing signs of burnout while having high levels of job engagement (Hakanen et al., 2018; Pyhalto et al., 2021). According to Maricuțoiu, Sulea, & Iancu, (2017) and Taris, Ybema, and van Beek (2017) work engagement and burnout can be viewed as either opposing dimensions



of the same phenomenon or as separate though partially overlapping conceptions. Although some employees may experience burnout and low work engagement concurrently other researchers have found a negative correlation between the two (Leiter & Maslach, 2017; Salmela-Aro et al., 2020). Cacciamani, Cesareni, Fiorilli, and Ligorio (2022) suggest that teachers' negative emotions as a result of decreased work engagement and increased burnout symptoms have a negative impact on students' academic performance. According to Cacciamani, et al. (2022), burnout among teachers is a poor indicator of work engagement at any level of education.

Furthermore, the study discovered that the symptoms of burnout, exhaustion and cynicism stand in stark contrast to the basic factors that determine work engagement, vigour and dedication, which are negatively correlated with burnout. Faskhodi (2018) revealed a high negative correlation between work engagement and job burnout among teachers and Chen et al. (2022) found a significant negative correlation between work engagement and job burnout. Holmström, Tuominen, Laasanen, and Veermans (2023) discovered that teachers who are extremely involved in their work show very little signs of burnout. Research by Salmela-Aro, Upadyaya, & Hietajarvi, (2020) and Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, (2020) provide evidence in favour of this. Therefore, to prevent job burnout from negatively affecting work performance, it is necessary to consider strengthening new teacher work engagement (Chen et al., 2022). As a result, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between work engagement and job burnout.

Work engagement mediates the relationship between institutional leadership and job burnout.

Research on work engagement mediating the relationship between institutional leadership and job burnout is still in need. The study outcome of Coetzer, Bussin, & Geldenhuys (2017) reveals that job resources more specifically, employees mediate a favourable association between leadership and work engagement and have also shown a negative relationship between servant leadership and burnout. Furthermore, the study's conclusions proved that employing servant leadership can improve work engagement and reduce burnout. Employees who work for servant leaders receive the support they need to be more engaged in their jobs and to feel less burnt out. Jonsdottir and Kristinsson (2020) discovered that a significant positive relationship exists between supervisors' active-empathetic listening and employees work engagement. The findings state that a significant impact on work commitment is vital since it decreases uncertainty, develops competence, and enhances employee self-esteem. This, in turn, reduces burnout (Jonsdottir & Kristinsson, 2020). Work engagement, according to Lebrón, Tabak, Shkoler, and Rabenu (2018), substantially mediates the relationship between leadership and organisational work behaviour, and that work engagement and work burnout are negatively connected.

Employees who perceived positive relationships with their leaders are not necessarily less emotionally burnt out, but they are less engaged in their work. According to Ford, Olsen, Khojasteh, Ware, and Urick (2019) the general argument that leadership is related to teachers' burnout and effective work engagements is reliable. The study further postulates that leaders who want to reduce teacher burnout in their school would be better served by addressing employees' perceived demands on competence and autonomy. Based on the discussion above, there is still a gap on work engagement as a mediator between institutional leadership and job burnout of new teachers in schools. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formed:

INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND JOB BURNOUT OF NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS: THE MEDIATING AND MODERATING ROLE OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Khutso Pitso Mankgele, Mahunele Thotse, Mpho Mokkaetji Chidi

H4: Work engagement mediates the relationship between institutional leadership and job burnout.

Professional development moderates the relationship between institutional leadership and job burnout of newly qualified teachers.

According to Fiorilli, Buonomo, Romano, Passiatore, Iezzi, Santoro, Benevene & Pepe (2020) teacher professional development include activities such as teacher recruitment, introduction, and mentorship as well as professional learning and career and leadership development. Sancar, Atal, and Deryakulu, (2021) describe professional development as a process that starts in teachers' college, continues throughout a teacher's career and is influenced by a teacher's traits, subject matter, and teaching methods. O'Sullivan (2018) backed up the idea that teachers' professional development is crucial to the teaching and learning process as well as student results. OECD (2018) reported that when teachers' professional development is given greater attention, student achievement enhances.

The leadership responsibilities of the school principal and teachers' professional development were found to be statistically significantly correlated (Chalikias et al., 2021). The position of the school principal, who must exhibit qualities like accountability, impartiality, and communication while maintaining open lines of communication with instructors, is also connected to the professional development of teachers. According to Hossain and Sultana's data from 2022, there is a link between burnout and professional progress that is unfavourable. The findings of Hossain and Sultana (2022) indicate a negative correlation between professional development and burnout. The outcomes reveal that, as professional development increases, the level of burnout decreases. Fiorilli et al. (2020) revealed that teachers' burnout is inversely related to their confidence in professional training and development. Additionally, the study shows that burned-out teachers are less motivated to enhance their careers through professional development.

The spectrum of negative feelings that a teacher experiences during burnout has a negative impact on classroom performance (Jensen & Solheim, 2019). For teachers to become more resilient, school leaders must change the professional development options that are available. Teachers are in demand of continued professional development that is relationship-centred rather than leaders leading one-time or behaviour-management-based professional development events (Phillips, 2021). The greater engagement of school leaders in continuous professional development and the deeper a teacher's resiliency, the better protection professional development has from the signs of teacher burnout (Ryu et al., 2022; Dai, 2023). Despite the close relationship between professional development and leadership; and professional development and burnout, there is still sparse literature on how professional development mediates the relationship between institutional leadership and job burnout of new teachers, hence the study hypothesize that:

H5: Professional development moderates the relationship between institutional leadership and job burnout of newly qualified teachers.

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The study utilised the quantitative research design. Data was collected from the respondents through the cross-sectional survey method. The sample population was newly qualified teachers in selected Districts in the Limpopo Province. Before the actual survey, a pilot study was conducted with newly qualified teachers in 10 secondary schools. Two academics in the area of Educational studies and Curriculum studies examined the



questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into five sections, demographic variables, institutional leadership, job burnout, work engagement and professional development. The participants in the survey were conveniently sampled. Self-administered questionnaire was employed during the data collection process. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured, and the names of the school were not requested nor included in the questionnaire. The participants in the survey were reminded weekly to complete the questionnaire through follow-up phone calls and emails. If no response is received after two months, it was treated as a nonresponse. The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies with acceptable psychometric properties. The cover page of the questionnaire contained information about the aim of the study and that participation is voluntary. The study used SmartPLS 4.0 to analyse the data from the respondents. Reliability and validity were ensured using the PLS-SEM.

Measures

Institutional leadership (IL) Seven questions adopted from (Buyema et al., 2019) were used to measure IL. The questions were based on the five-point Likert scale with 1 = “Strongly disagree” and 5 = “Strongly agree”.

Job burnout (JB) Eight questions adopted from (Kristensen et al., 2005) were used to measure JB. The questions were based on the five-point Likert scale with 1 = “Strongly disagree” and 5 = “Strongly agree”.

Work engagement (WE) Seven questions adopted from (Schaufeli et al., 2006) were used to measure WE. The questions were based on the five-point Likert scale with 1 = “Strongly disagree” and 5 = “Strongly agree”.

Professional development (PD) Six questions adopted from (Suarez, 2011) were used to measure PD. The questions were based on the five-point Likert scale with 1 = “Strongly disagree” and 5 = “Strongly agree”.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Response rate and Demographic respondents

Three hundred questionnaires were distributed, and one hundred and thirty-eight questionnaires were returned. The gender composition of the respondents was seventy-eight males and sixty females. Majority of the respondents were between twenty and thirty years, secondly held a Bachelor of Education (Bed Degree) and lastly there have two to five years of teaching experience.

Statistical model

Hair et al. (2019) point out that structural equation modeling (SEM) is one of the most suitable statistical methods for data analysis. Covariance-based (CB-SEM) and variance-based partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) are the two main methods of SEM (Hair et al., 2014). PLS-SEM was used in this investigation to analyse the data statistically. The main justification for this choice is PLS-SEM’s applicability to confirmatory and exploratory investigations (Hair et al., 2016). With no explicit requirements for data normality, PLS-SEM is a suitable method for complicated and multi-order models. PLS-SEM is also appropriate for analysing small data sets (Bashir et al., 2021). Therefore, the PLS-SEM approach is taken into account in the current study while utilizing Smart PLS software to analyse empirical data.

Model measurement

INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND JOB BURNOUT OF NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS: THE MEDIATING AND MODERATING ROLE OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Khutso Pitso Mankgele, Mahunele Thotse, Mpho Mokgaetji Chidi

The model’s reliability is validated by using the values of Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extract (AVE) (Hair et al., 2014). According to the threshold level set by Hair et al. (2011), the values for Cronbach’s alpha, CR, and AVE should be greater or equal to 0.7. Table 1 depicts that all values meet the necessary standards. The AVE values are used to determine the convergent validity of constructs. The acceptable criterion for AVE is that the values must fulfil the set standard, which is 0.5 or above. The AVE values are bigger than 0.5, as seen in Table 1. Therefore, the convergence validity of the variables is thus established.

The validity of the constructs was assessed in this study using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratios and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. By finding the square roots of the AVE values for the model constructs, the Fornell-Larcker criterion is established (Hair et al., 2016). The data satisfy the Fornell-Larcker criterion if the first value on each column’s upper side is greater than the values on its bottom side. Table 2 reveals that all Fornell-Larcker criteria values meet the predetermined standards. Hair et al. (2019) note that in order to confirm the specifications of HTMT ratios, all values of HTMT must be smaller than 0.85. Table 3’s findings reveal that the constructs’ HTMT values are smaller than 0.85, which suggests that the model used for the current analysis has demonstrated discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). According to the evaluation of the R square values, latent variable values more than or near 0.5 indicate the model’s moderate strength, while values closer to 0.25 indicate its weak strength (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 1: Measurement reliabilities

Construct	Composite reliability	Cronbach’s alpha	AVE
Institutional leadership	0.924	0.898	0.710
Job burnout	0.941	0.922	0.762
Work engagement	0.937	0.899	0.831
Professional development	0.899	0.860	0.641

Table 2: Fornell-Larcker criterion

Construct	IL	JB	WE	PD
IL	0.843			
JB	0.065	0.873		
WE	0.443	0.439	0.912	
PD	0.760	0.630	0.442	0.786

Institutional leadership (IL), Job burnout (JB), Work engagement (WE) and Professional development (PD)

Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT)

Construct	IL	JB	WE	PD
IL				
JB	0.716			
WE	0.494	0.477		
PD	0.842	0.686	0.201	

Institutional leadership (IL), Job burnout (JB), Work engagement (WE) and Professional development (PD). Bold values represent the relationship between variables.



Structural model evaluation

The bootstrapping technique with 5,000 samples is utilized to conduct the empirical analysis for this study. In the present study, the focus was given to the statistical “t” and “p” values for accepting and rejecting hypotheses. Table 4 displays the results for direct connections. The findings of the first hypothesis ($t = 7.011$, $p = 0.000$) certified that institutional leadership (IL) positively impacts job burnout (JB). The path value informed that IL caused 0.312 variations in JB. The H1 is accepted on the basis of statistics described in Table 5. The results of H2 ($t = 8.046$, $p = 0.000$) verified that institutional leadership (IL) positively impacts work engagement (WE), which authenticates that H2 is accepted. The beta value of H2 is 0.630. The outcomes of the third hypothesis show that ($t = 12.987$, $p = 0.000$) work engagement (WE) positively impacts job burnout (JB). The H3 is accepted with a path value of 0.760.

Table 4: Direct relationship

Relationship	Path value	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Hypotheses outcome
IL → JB	0.312	0.310	0.044	7.011	0.000	H1, accepted
IL → WE	0.630	0.620	0.078	8.046	0.000	H2, accepted
WE → JB	0.760	0.753	0.058	12.987	0.000	H3, accepted

Institutional leadership (IL), Job burnout (JB), Work engagement (WE) and Professional development (PD)

Mediation and moderation results

The results of mediation analysis are described in Table 5. The results show that ($t = 4.897$, $p = 0.000$) work engagement (WE) mediates the association between institutional leadership (IL) and job burnout (JB). The H4 is accepted with the path value of 0.197. The moderation results are presented in Table 6. The findings of H5 t statistics (5.787), and p statistics (0.000) with a negative path value (−0.327) revealed that professional development (PD) does not moderate the association between institutional leadership (IL) and job burnout (JB). Therefore, H5 is rejected.

Table 5: Indirect relationship

Relationship	Path value	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Hypotheses outcome
WE → IL → JB	0.197	0.193	0.040	4.897	0.000	H4, accepted

Institutional leadership (IL), Job burnout (JB) and Work engagement (WE)

Table 6: Moderation relationship

Relationship	Path value	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Hypotheses outcome
PD → IL → JB	-0.327	-0.315	0.057	5.787	0.000	H5, rejected

Professional development (PD), Job burnout (JB) and Work engagement (WE)

DISCUSSION

Newly qualified teachers often experience high levels of job burnout due to various factors, including institutional leadership practices. The leadership within educational institutions plays a crucial role in shaping the work environment and influencing the job

INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND JOB BURNOUT OF NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS: THE MEDIATING AND MODERATING ROLE OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT*Khutso Pitso Mankgele, Mahunele Thotse, Mpho Mokgaetji Chidi*

satisfaction and well-being of teachers. This study proposed five hypotheses to test the relationships empirically. According to the first hypothesis, IL positively impacts JB. The second hypothesis, IL positively impacts WE. The third hypothesis, WE positively impact JB, while the fourth hypotheses depicted that WE mediate the connection between IL and JB. The fifth hypothesis of this study proposed that PD negatively moderates the association between IL and JB. According to findings, H1 is accepted, demonstrating that IL positively impacts JB. These results align with earlier research (Jumani & Malik, 2017; Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019; Troeger, 2021). These studies highlighted that institutional leaders play a crucial role in promoting autonomy and decision-making among employees. When teachers have a sense of control over their work and feel empowered to make decisions that align with their professional judgment, they are less likely to experience burnout. Leaders can create opportunities for teachers to take leadership roles, engage in shared decision-making processes, and have input in shaping school policies and practices. This involvement and autonomy have been shown to increase job satisfaction and reduce burnout (Frahm, 2020). Furthermore, institutional leadership can also indirectly impact burnout by influencing factors such as workload, role clarity, and job demands (Khan et al., 2020). Leaders who communicate expectations clearly, distribute resources efficiently, and provide support can help ensure that teachers have manageable workloads and understand their roles and responsibilities. This reduces stress and prevents burnout caused by overwhelming demands and unclear expectations.

The results of the second hypothesis depicted that IL positively impacts WE, therefore, H2 of this research is also accepted. These results align with earlier research (Mourão, 2018; Jia-jun & Hua-ming, 2022). These studies highlighted that institutional leader could promote professional development opportunities for employees. Continuous learning and growth are crucial for work engagement. When leaders prioritise and allocate resources for professional development, they show a commitment to the growth and advancement of their employees. By providing opportunities for learning, skill development, and career progression, leaders enhance employees' sense of engagement and purpose in their work. Furthermore, the findings of the study accepted H3, indicating that WE positively impact JB. These results align with earlier research (Nerstad et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2020; Sypniewska et al., 2023). Engaged workers who are more open to new information, productive, and willing to go the extra mile are less likely to experience job burnout. This is because work engagement provides individuals with a sense of fulfilment and motivation, which helps them cope with the demands and challenges of their job. Additionally, engaged workers proactively change their work environment in order to stay engaged, which can lead to a more positive and supportive work environment that reduces the likelihood of job burnout (Zhenjing et al., 2022). By being fully engaged and invested in their work, individuals are more likely to experience a sense of purpose and accomplishment, reducing feelings of burnout and increasing job satisfaction and overall well-being.

The findings confirm the mediating effects of WE in the relationship between IL and JB in support of hypotheses four. The results are consistent with earlier research a study conducted by Ma (2023), when teachers perceive their leaders as supportive and empowering, they tend to be more engaged in their work. This engagement, in turn, acts as a protective factor against JB. A study by Ornaghi et al. (2023) further supports this notion, revealing that work engagement has a direct negative effect on job burnout. Therefore, it can be inferred that work engagement serves as a mechanism through which IL influences teachers' experience of JB. By fostering a positive and supportive work environment,



leaders can enhance teachers' engagement, thereby reducing their vulnerability to burnout. The moderating results depicted that PD does not moderate the association between IL and JB. These findings show that the H5 of this study is not accepted. This study is not accepted. These results are inconsistent with various studies that show that opportunities for professional development are positively correlated with job satisfaction. (Esakkimuthu & Vellaichamy, 2015; Pandita & Dominic, 2016). It was found that professionals who are involved in professional development activities during their job are more satisfied than those who do not participate. The reason behind this rejection may be the weak professional development of the teachers, professional development opportunities can help employees develop the necessary skills and competencies to cope with job demands and better manage stress. Professional development can also enhance employees' sense of self-efficacy and resilience, which can buffer against burnout (Fernando et al., 2020; Pradhan et al., 2021; Islam et al., 2023). However, professional development does not moderate or change the strength or direction of the relationship between IL and JB. The relationship between IL and JB exists independently of professional development. IL can either contribute to or mitigate JB through its practices, while professional development can help individuals better cope with job demands and reduce burnout.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the mediating and moderating role of work engagement and professional development on the relationship between institutional leadership and job burnout among newly qualified teachers in the selected Districts in the Limpopo Province. The findings of this study highlight the importance of supportive institutional leadership in reducing job burnout among teachers. Furthermore, the results suggest that work engagement and professional development act as important mediators and moderators in this relationship. By actively engaging in their work and continuously improving their professional skills, teachers are more likely to experience lower levels of burnout. These findings have significant implications for educational institutions and policy makers, as they underscore the need for targeted strategies to promote supportive leadership, work engagement, and professional development for teachers. Limitations of this study include the small sample size and the specific context of the selected Districts in the Limpopo Province, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should aim to replicate these findings in larger samples and diverse settings to provide more robust evidence on the role of institutional leadership, work engagement, and professional development in teachers' well-being and job outcomes.

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INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND JOB BURNOUT OF NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS: THE MEDIATING AND MODERATING ROLE OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Khutso Pitso Mankgele, Mahunele Thotse, Mpho Mokgaetji Chidi

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INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND JOB BURNOUT OF NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS: THE MEDIATING AND MODERATING ROLE OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Khutso Pitso Mankgele, Mahunele Thotse, Mpho Mokgaetji Chidi

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