# Dimensions of Work Engagement and Teacher Burnout: A Study of Relations among Iranian EFL Teachers

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*Abstract: Among different teacher-related variables burnout can have irrevocable effects on the whole educational system. Due to the importance of considering all positive and negative related variables, and also lack of attention to positive criteria in the area of work-related factors, this study is the first attempt in Iran in the field to include engagement as a positive factor involved. The purpose of the present study is to investigate any possible relationship between work engagement and teachers' sense of burnout, as well as associations between work engagement, burnout, and teachers' years of experience. The correlational analyses indicate a significant and negative relationship between work engagement and burnout. Moreover, the higher the participants' experience is, the greater the amount of their work engagement is. On the contrary, as the number of years of teaching increases, the level of burnout decreases. On the other hand, negative relationship exists between burnout and their experience. The results offer a number of implications for in-service and pre-service teacher training systems.*

**Keywords:** Burnout, Work engagement, Experience

## Introduction

Since teachers play a significant role in students' success, it is vital to know which set of teacher-related factors are the more effective ones in students' achievements. In addition, it seems that successful teachers share a number of characteristics (Rushton, Morgan, & Richard, 2007). Among different variables, some including burnout need more attention (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006). Otherwise, it can have irrevocable effects on teaching profession (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998). "Burnout leads to physical symptoms, to absenteeism, and to job turnover" (Maslach, 2017, p. 8). In fact, according to Maslach and Goldberg (1998), teachers' behavior, students' outcome, and as a result, the whole educational system can be affected negatively by burnout. Related studies to burnout suggest that burnout may be a product of

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environmental factors. Furthermore, according to the bulk of research evidence, environmental factors, in particular factors relevant to work setting, are significantly related to burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1984b).

Owing to the fact that all teacher related variables should be taken into account, and also the fact that in the literature related to the area of health psychology the negative aspects of teaching have received more attention (Hakanen et al., 2006), recently some concepts such as work engagement which is a positive opponent for burnout have been the concern of a considerable amount of research. In fact, instead of being concerned only with negative notions, researchers have been more obsessed with workers' well-being (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004). While from one perspective, work engagement could be regarded as the opposite of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001), it is considered, according to another view, a mental work related state, developing independently of burnout, and consisting of vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). Moreover, the results of another study by Wingerden, Derks, and Bakker (2017) suggest that the personal resources intervention which was to do with those aspects of the self, such as resiliency and the power to influence the environment have a positive causal effect on work engagement. Given the above points, the present study is an attempt to include teacher engagement as a positive factor involved in the area of teacher education in Iran. Moreover, since in order to explain teachers' motivation, some criteria like teachers' years of experience should also be taken into consideration (Klassen & Chiu, 2010), this study considers teachers' years of experience as another variable. According to the purpose of the study, the following questions are posed;

- Question 1: Is there any significant relationship between teachers' burnout and their work engagement?
- Question 2: To what extent can components of work engagement predict burnout?
- Question 3: Is there any significant relationship between teachers' experience, work engagement, and burnout?

**Literature Review**

This section first gives an overview of the theoretical definitions of the variables included in this study. Next, a review of the related literature and empirical studies on burnout and work engagement is presented.

Engagement is referred to as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli, et al., 2002, p. 74). Vigor is defined as "high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties" (Schaufeli et al., p. 74). Dedication is defined as "a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge" (Schaufeli et al., p. 74). Absorption as the last dimension of engagement is defined by Schaufeli et al.as "being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work" (p. 75).

Burnout was originally defined by Freudenberger (1974) as "the state of physical and emotional depletion resulting from conditions of work" (p. 160). He coined the term burnout to explain the stress patterns he observed in workers at free clinics and halfway houses. In fact, as a result of working too much and avoiding making time for meaningful communication, these workers were both physically and mentally exhausted. Although many factors contribute to burnout in a given situation, the essence of burnout is undue stress over a period of time, with

several consequences at the heart of which is emotional exhaustion. In the majority of cases, burnout refers to a certain amount of emotional exhaustion as a result of superfluous expectations made on people in positions expected to help other people (Jackson, Schwab, & Schulaer, 1986). Burnout is operationally defined as a syndrome consisting of three elements of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1993). Emotional exhaustion is a decrease in the amount of emotional resources which causes the person not to be able to stay at a physical level (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). According to Maslach et al., depersonalization includes negative and cynical attitudes and feelings about oneself and one's students. According to this definition, this component seems to be relevant to depersonalization. Maslach et al. (1996) defines reduced personal accomplishment as the negative self-evaluation of oneself regarding one's work or one's students.

As the last variable in this study, experience was defined as the number of years an instructor has been teaching English at language schools.

### Related Studies to Work Engagement

A huge body of research has been conducted on the area of work engagement. Among these studies, those reporting that work engagement can have positive impact on various aspects of individuals, families, and organizations are related to job satisfaction (Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012).

Additionally, Gonzalez-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker, and Lloret (2006) examined the relation between burnout and work engagement to investigate whether these two concepts were exact opposites or independent factors. The results revealed that the core burnout and work engagement dimensions could be viewed as opposite factors along two distinct bipolar dimensions.

In 2008, the result of a study by Schaufeli, Taris, and Rhenen indicated that there was a positive correlation between burnout and workaholism, "which is a form of behavioral addiction that can lead to reduced life and job satisfaction, anxiety, depression, burnout, work–family conflict, and impaired productivity" (Van Gordon, Shonin, Dunn, Garcia-Campayo, Demarzo, & Griffiths, 2017, p. 1), while burnout and work engagement correlated negatively. On the contrary, there was no significant relationship between workaholism and work engagement.

### Related Studies to Teachers' Burnout

Grayson and Alvarez (2008) examined the components of school climate (i.e. parent/community relations, administration, and student behavioral values) and evaluated their effect on the core dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feeling of low personal accomplishment. They also considered some demographic factors such as gender, age, and years of experience, teacher satisfaction, and teacher-related school climate. The result of the study indicated that various school climate-related criteria were related to each of the three burnout subscales.

Eghteasadi Rudi (2011) conducted a mixed methods research among Iranian EFL learners. The result of his study showed that students' low proficiency, lack of support from administration, and the nature of the second language were the main reasons for teacher burnout.

Additionally, teachers with higher levels of autonomy, self-efficacy, and extroversion were more resistant to burnout.

Another study by (Etminan, 2014) investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and the components of burnout among EFL teachers in Iran. The result revealed a significant relationship between these three components and job satisfaction, which means there was a positive relationship with personal accomplishment and a negative relationship with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

Considering the above-mentioned body of research, there has been no study, particularly in Iran, investigating the correlates of work engagement. In order to bridge this gap, the underlying aim of this study is to find any possible relationships between burnout and work engagement.

## Method

The following sections give a description of participants, instrumentation, and the procedure employed in the study.

### Participants

Participants of this study included 117 randomly selected English teachers of both genders who taught English at private language institutes of Tehran. These teachers' experience ranged between one month and 25 years of teaching English. They also had been teaching different levels of proficiency and in various contexts (kids, teenagers, and adults).

### Instrumentation

Work Engagement was measured applying Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). Previous studies have shown that UWES has satisfactory psychometric properties (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The questionnaire is a five-point Likert-scale scored between one (extremely disagree) and five (extremely agree) and contains 17 items asking the participants how often they experience feelings relevant to work engagement. These items are related to the three aspects of work engagement: vigor including six items, dedication consisting of 5 items, and absorption containing 6 items. The Cronbach Alpha values for the three scales have been reported as .79 for vigor, .89 for dedication and .72 for absorption for the employee version (Schaufeli et al., 2002). After evaluation of the Persian questionnaire and piloting it, the calculated Cronbach Alpha for vigor was .64, for apsorbtion .73, and for dedication .81. The results in Table 1 indicate that the total scale and the subscales except "vigor" subscale have almost high internal consistency reliabilities (i.e. above .7). As regards the vigor subscale, however, it should be noted that the alpha is just a little below .7, and the number of items is very low (six items); therefore, with regard to this low number of items, this level of alpha could be considered acceptable (Table 1).

In order to provide the participants with the Persian version, first, the original questionnaire was translated into Persian. Then, two university professors with PhD in the field of Applied Linguistics and also highly experienced in research commented on the researcher's translated questionnaire considering the concept of work engagement. The revised version, then,

was back-translated into English. Afterwards, two other university professors with PhD in Applied Linguistics and also experienced in conducting research, who had not seen the original questionnaire in English, were given the two English versions, the original and also the back-translated one, and asked to assess the extent to which the two versions agreed with each other, without knowing which one was the original questionnaire. Eventually, after modifying the questionnaire based on the professors' comments, the questions were administrated to 31 participants similar to the target participants, and the reliability coefficients were computed for the total scale and subscales (Table 1), indicating acceptable levels of reliability.

| Scale | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|---|---|---|
| Engagement scale | .887 | 17 |
| Vigor | .649 | 6 |
| Dedication | .811 | 5 |
| Absorption | .738 | 6 |

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics (work engagement subscales)**

In order to measure burnout, the Persian version of the Burnout Measurement Inventory (BMI) consisting of 22 items (Cano-Garcia, Padilla-Munoz, & Carrasco-Ortiz, 2005) was employed. The factorial validity of the MBI-GS (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998) has been confirmed while being used for various professions and in different countries (Schutte, Toppinen, Kalimo, & Schaufeli, 2000).

In this questionnaire, the participants evaluate their sense of burnout regarding the frequency of burnout occurrence ranging from zero (never) to six (every day). The total score is calculated by the sum of obtained score for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and the reversed value of personal accomplishment.

The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients for the three scales were .90 for emotional exhaustion, .79 for depersonalization, and personal accomplishment .71 (Motallebzadeh, Ashraf, & Tabatabaee Yazdi, 2014). In another study, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of the scales were reported as .79, .60, and .80 for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (Eghteasadi Rudi, 2011).

Finally, the participants' demographic information including their years of experience was collected.

**Procedure**

In order to collect the necessary data for this study, the questionnaires were prepared in hard copies and online forms. After obtaining permission from the language schools' principals and teachers, the hard copies were distributed among the teachers, or the link of the online google forms was sent to the participants. The teachers were assured that the results would be only employed for the research. The approximate time for submitting the answers was ten minutes. In the next step, all the data was inserted into SPSS software for statistical analysis.

**Design**
*Variables*

In the current research, burnout score and work engagement, both the total score and the subscale scores, along with years of experience were categorized as interval variables.

**Research Design**

Quantitative analysis was carried out in order to find the answer of the questions. Additionally, since investigating the relationship between work engagement and burnout required applying correlational measures, first the normality of the collected data was checked by computing skewness and kurtosis ratios. Although the computed skewness and kurtosis ratios for burnout revealed that the data was not normal, , Pearson Product Moment as a parametric statistics was run since it is considered robust against violation of normality when sample size is large enough (n = 117).

After computing Pearson Product Moment correlation, , in order to find if each scale of work engagement could predict the sense of burnout, multiple regression was run. Before this stage, the first assumption of multiple regression concerned with multicollinearity was tested. After ensuring it was met, , the second assumption to do with the normality of the regression standardized residuals was investigated checking the Normal Probability Plot. Finally, the ANOVA was used to examine the Null hypothesis. In addition, Beta values under the Standardized Coefficients were checked in order to see how much each work engagement subscale contributed to the prediction of burnout.

Since the last question required the association measures between teachers' experience, sense of burnout, and work engagement, after checking the normality, Pearson Product Moment was run again.

**Data Analysis**

*Question 1: Is there any significant relationship between teachers' burnout and their work engagement?*

This question required employing association measures between the variables. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables. Since the skewness and kurtosis ratios of burnout computed from this table were beyond -+1.96, normally non-parametric statistics (i.e. spearman rho) were supposed to be employed; however, since the sample size was large enough (n = 117), Pearson Product Moment correlation as a parametric statistic was robust enough to be run.

| | N | Min | Max | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | Std. Error | | Std. Error |
| Absorption. | 117 | 15.00 | 30.00 | 23.8120 | 3.82355 | -.434 | .224 | -.558 | .444 |
| Dedication. | 117 | 16.00 | 25.00 | 21.8205 | 2.62487 | -.494 | .224 | -.919 | .444 |
| Vigor. | 117 | 16.00 | 30.00 | 24.2821 | 2.76632 | -.110 | .224 | -.110 | .444 |
| Engagement. | 117 | 49.00 | 85.00 | 69.9145 | 7.90741 | -.259 | .224 | -.317 | .444 |
| Burnout. | 117 | 23.00 | 116.00 | 48.5043 | 16.85569 | 1.101 | .224 | 1.456 | .444 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 117 | | | | | | | | |

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics (work engagement and its subscales)**

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation between burnout and work engagement total and its subscales. The results indicate that burnout has a significantly negative relationship with work engagement and its subscales (p < .01, large effect size with 16% to 25% common variance). The common variances show that between 16 to 25 percent of the times, as the burnout among the teachers increases, the work engagement decreases, and vice versa. In sum, these results indicate that there is a significant relationship between teachers' burnout and their work engagement (both total scale & its subscales).

| | | Absorption. | Dedication. | Vigor. | Engagement. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Burnout. | Pearson Correlation | -.411** | -.448** | -.488** | -.518** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 3: Correlations (Burnout and work engagement)**

*Question 2: Can the components of work engagement predict burnout?*

Since the previous research questions showed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' burnout and their work engagement (both total scale and its subscales), it was possible to investigate this question involving prediction and running multiple regression analysis. Before running multiple regression, one assumption of multiple regression which was to do with multicollinearity was investigated by considering the correlation among the independent or predictor variables (i.e. work engagement subscales). These correlations are presented in Table 4 and all indicate the correlations among the independent (i.e. predictor) variables of the study are not above .7, which demonstrates that the multicollinearity assumption is met.

| | | Absorption. | Dedication. | Vigor. | Burnout. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Absorption. | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .599** | .587** | -.411** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 |
| Dedication. | Pearson Correlation | .599** | 1 | .615** | -.448** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 |
| Vigor. | Pearson Correlation | .587** | .615** | 1 | -.488** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | | .000 |
| | N | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 |
| Burnout. | Pearson Correlation | -.411** | -.448** | -.488** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 117 | 117 | 117 | 117 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 4: Correlations (among the variables or work engagement subscales)**

Another assumption of multiple regression is the normality of the regression standardized residuals, which was checked via checking the Normal Probability Plot and histogram of the regression standardized residuals (see Appendix). The histogram showed an almost normal curve and the plot points had lain in a relatively straight diagonal line from bottom left to top right without too many deviations; therefore, it was assumed the assumption of normality of the regression standardized residuals was met for regression analysis. Since there was a clear or systematic pattern to the residuals (e.g. curvilinear or higher on one side than the other) with relatively few deviations from a centralized rectangle, it was assumed that there was no violation of homoscedasticity in regression analysis.

Since the literature suggested no order for entering the predicting variables in the regression model and there was almost no logic for this issue, the method of regression was chosen to be simultaneous multiple regression analysis. In Table 5, the value given under the heading adjusted R Square indicates how much of the variance in the dependent variable (i.e. teacher's burnout) is explained by the model (including the entered variables). In this case the value is .26 which, expressed as a percentage, explains 26 percent of the variance in teacher's burnout.

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .531[a] | .282 | .263 | 14.47480 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Vigor.Total, Absorption.Total, Dedication.Total
b. Dependent Variable: Burnout.Total

**Table 5: Model Summary[b]**

To assess the statistical significance of the above result, it was necessary to look in Table 6. The ANOVA tested the null hypothesis that multiple R in the population equals zero. As the results indicate, the model reaches statistical significance ($p < .01$); therefore, all of the predictor variables (i.e. engagement subscales) together made significant predictive contribution to the model.

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Regression | 9281.518 | 3 | 3093.839 | 14.766 | .000[b] |
| 1 | Residual | 23675.730 | 113 | 209.520 | | |
| | Total | 32957.248 | 116 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Burnout.Total
b. Predictors: (Constant), Vigor.Total, Absorption.Total, Dedication.Total

**Table 6: ANOVA[a] (testing the significance of the results)**

In order to see which of the variables included in the model separately contributed to the prediction of the dependent variable, Table 7 was checked. The Beta values under Standardized Coefficients shows how much the components of work engagement made unique contribution to the prediction of teacher's burnout. Evidently, Vigor made a lot more contribution to the regression model than Dedication and Absorption. Put simply, the beta value for Vigor indicated that one unit/standard deviation increase in the independent variable (i.e. adaptability) is associated with a decrease of .29-value unit/standard deviation in the dependent Variable (i.e. teacher's burnout), with other independent variables held constant. Moreover, the Beta value for other components indicates that one unit/standard deviation increase in the independent variables (i.e. Dedication & Absorption) is associated with a decrease of respectively .19 and .12-value unit/standard deviation in the dependent Variable (i.e. teacher's burnout), with other independent variables held constant. Moreover, checking the significant value column indicates that only Vigor made significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable (t = -2.77, p < .01).

In sum, out of the components of teachers' work engagement, only Vigor predicted teacher's burnout. The inclusion of Dedication and Absorption in the model only decreased the predictability of teachers' burnout; however, the predictive power of all the work engagement components taken together in the model was still significant as the ANOVA results indicated. With regard to the R squared value, the effect size for the predictive power of both independent variables was large.

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| | (Constant) | 132.333 | 12.871 | | 10.282 | .000 |
| 1 | Absorption. | -.531 | .468 | -.121 | -1.136 | .258 |
| | Dedication. | -1.237 | .700 | -.193 | -1.768 | .080 |
| | Vigor. | -1.820 | .657 | -.299 | -2.771 | .007 |

a. Dependent Variable: Burnout.

**Table 7: Coefficients[a]**

*Question 3: Is there any significant relationship between teachers' experience, work engagement and burnout?*

This question required employing association measures between the variables. Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables. Since the skewness and kurtosis ratios of burnout and experience computed from this table are beyond -+1.96, normally non-parametric statistics (i.e. spearman rho) had to be employed; however, since the sample size was large enough (n = 117), Pearson Product Moment correlation as a parametric statistic was robust enough to be run.

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | Std. Error | | Std. Error |
| Teachers' years of experience | 116 | .10 | 25.00 | 6.4828 | 5.43797 | 1.145 | .225 | 1.056 | .446 |
| Engagement. | 117 | 49.00 | 85.00 | 69.9145 | 7.90741 | -.259 | .224 | -.317 | .444 |
| teachers' id | 117 | 1.00 | 117.00 | 59.0000 | 33.91902 | .000 | .224 | -1.200 | .444 |
| Absorption. | 117 | 15.00 | 30.00 | 23.8120 | 3.82355 | -.434 | .224 | -.558 | .444 |
| Dedication. | 117 | 16.00 | 25.00 | 21.8205 | 2.62487 | -.494 | .224 | -.919 | .444 |
| Vigor. | 117 | 16.00 | 30.00 | 24.2821 | 2.76632 | -.110 | .224 | -.110 | .444 |
| Burnout. | 117 | 23.00 | 116.00 | 48.5043 | 16.85569 | 1.101 | .224 | 1.456 | .444 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 116 | | | | | | | | |

**Table 8: Descriptive Statistics (Years of experience, work engagement, and burnout)**

Table 9 presents the Pearson correlation between experience, burnout and work engagement total and its subscales. The results indicated that burnout, vigor and total engagement had a significant relationship with experience ($p < .01$, medium to large effect size with 4% to 5% common variance). With regard to the sign of the coefficients, the common variances show that four percent of the times, as the experience among the teachers increases, the work engagement increases, and vice versa. On the other hand, as the experience among the teachers increases, burnout among teachers decreases, and vice versa. That is to say, there is a significant relationship between teachers' experience, work engagement (total and vigor) and burnout.

| | | Absorption.Total | Dedication.Total | Vigor.Total | Burnout.Total | Engagement.Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers' years of experience | Pearson Correlation | .173 | .157 | .209[*] | -.239[**] | .209[*] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .063 | .092 | .024 | .010 | .024 |
| | N | 116 | 116 | 116 | 116 | 116 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 9: Correlations (work engagement subscales and total, burnout, and years of experience)**

## Discussion

Based on the preceding presentation of the results of the questions, there is a significant relationship between teachers' work engagement (the total and vigor) and their burnout. Furthermore, the higher the participants' years of experience in teaching are, the greater the amount of their work engagement is and vice versa. In other words, as the years of teaching English increase among teachers, the amount of their work engagement grows. On the other hand, the higher the teachers' years of experience are, the lower their level of burnout is. Eventually, among the components of work engagement only vigor can predict burnout. The findings of these questions provide support for a number of previous studies taken into account in the following.

A study conducted by Schaufeli et al. (2008) on 587 telecom managers probed whether burnout, workaholism, and work engagement were different concepts. The result indicated that first, burnout and wokaholism factors were positively correlated whilst there was no significant relationship between wokaholism and work engagement. In addition, there was a significant

negative relationship between burnout and work engagement which was the same as the findings in the current study. As mentioned before, this study offers further support for the result of the study carried out by (Schaufeli et al., 2002) sampling 314 university students and 619 employees in order to investigate the factorial structure of a new questionnaire measuring work engagement. The result indicated that all three constructs of work engagement and burnout were associated significantly and negatively. In contrast, the interrelations of work engagement and burnout components were all positive. Furthermore, the results of the current research corroborate the findings of the meta-analysis of correlates of work engagement by Bakker and Leiter (2010), according to whom, except for some exceptions, all the scales of work engagement were negatively correlated with burnout.

These findings seem to be rational since approximately one third to one quarter of the variance of burnout and work engagement is fairly negatively associated (Schaufeli et al., 2002). In other words, theoretically the two constructs are antipodes, it seems logical that they associate negatively in practice. In other words, teachers with higher levels of work engagement show lower amount of burnout and vice versa. However, Leiter and Maslach (2017) believe that investigating more about the relationships among components of UWES and MBI "may not come from assessing the presence or absence of a specific state, but from considering a range of possible psychological connections with work that encompass all of the core dimensions of vigor, exhaustion, dedication, cynicism, efficacy, and absorption" (p. 57).

On the other hand, regarding the outcome, burnout, vigor, and total work engagement correlate significantly with years of experience. These findings are consistent with a number of studies and meanwhile inconsistent with some others. For instance, based on the study by Fisher (2011) in which 385 current and potential advanced secondary level teachers of Southeastern United States participated, the sense of burnout between novice and experienced teachers was significantly different, meaning that the new teachers showed higher levels of burnout. Additionally, the result of a meta-analysis, which concerned 20 unique samples of 18 studies in the field on 3941 samples, investigating any relationship between burnout and age or years of experience, indicated that there was a significant but small negative association between years of experience and burnout (Brewer & Shapard, 2004). These findings may be owing to the fact that teachers usually embark on such a demanding career with a great deal of enthusiasm, but after a short period of teaching they encounter variety of unexpected difficulties for which they are not able to find either a source or support. On the other hand, the experienced ones are those who may have developed coping strategies.

However, a number of scholars have reported results inconsistent with the above mentioned findings. For instance, Dimunova and Nagyova's (2012) study revealed that the correlation between burnout and the length of experience was non-linear. In fact, participants with one to three years of experience in addition to those with 5 and above years of experience showed significantly higher rates of burnout. The results suggest that working energetically and neglecting oneself is likely to be one of the reasons why one to three year-experienced employees experience greater deal of burnout. As they get more experienced, they are more balanced and as a result the rate of burnout decreases. However, after five years, as a result of encountering increasing personal and job related demands the sense of burnout dramatically increases. A. Bayani, Bagheri, and Bayani (2013) reported that the result of a study on a sample of 280 secondary teachers including 143 male and 147 female indicated no significant difference with regard to burnout and years of experience. This contrast may be due to the difference in the levels and subject the participants taught or even their age (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). In fact,

these factors had not been controlled in this study, and it seems a larger body of research is required in this regard controlling more intervening variables such as gender, age, levels and so on.

## Conclusion

Owing to the fact that it seems a larger body of research reports a significant correlation between teachers' years of experience, burnout, and work engagement, novice teachers require more support. This support can be provided from teacher training systems by teaching some coping strategies to those in the organizations who are more likely to deal with higher rates of burnout (Stanton, Howard, Iso, & Seppo, 1998). It is suggested that, considering the fact that new teachers are more exposed to be burned out, it might be advantageous for those in charge to hire new employees in the institute to take burnout- preventive measures in advance (Brewer & Shapard, 2004). Instructing coping strategies during teacher training courses could be beneficial as well.

According to Stanton, et al. (1998), when years of experience negatively correlate with burnout, it may be more rewarding for employees to work in an institute for a longer period of time and thus one supervisor. It may be due to the fact that as a result of working for longer years and getting more experienced, teachers learn more techniques and strategies in order to cope with burnout. Furthermore, the findings of this study seem to have vital implications for administrators and even the whole education system. In fact, as burnout and work engagement play an important role in the teachers' performance in the classroom, policy makers are expected to be more concerned with mental state of English teachers. Finally, according to Brewer and Shapard (2004) policy makers are expected to make supervisors and institute managers aware of the possible relationship between years of experience and burnout. In fact, when these people in charge are aware of the possible association between burnout and years of teaching, they may support novice instructors by taking burnout preventive measures and holding workshops in order to teach them how to cope with burnout.

The first concern of the researcher is that as the responses are self-report, the results of the study are dependent on the participants' honesty and interpretation. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that the questions have been interpreted in the same way by all the teachers. Furthermore, since the study was conducted among teachers of different language schools, some other issues were not considered in this study, such as administrative support and time scheduling could have affected the findings. Moreover, despite a lot of efforts made by the researcher, she was not allowed to administer the questionnaires at some language schools. Therefore, the participants were only teachers of some private language schools in Tehran. Since this study is the first one in the field considering work engagement as a teacher-related variable, further research would contribute to investigate currently ambiguous work engagement correlates which might result in English teachers' more job satisfaction.

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## Appendix