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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SELF-EFFICACY, LOC AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE—AN ARGUMENT FOR INVESTIGATION AMONG FURTHER EDUCATION TEACHERS IN THE U.K

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that work-life balance may influence the wellbeing of teachers in further education (FE) in the UK, and this may occur where the lack of adequate balance engenders emotional labour and burnout. This effect may be compounded where there is lack of social support. However, personality variables such as hardiness may influence the extent to which teachers feel in control of their work. It is argued that LOC (locus of control) and efficacy are other variables which may influence teachers' perceptions of themselves and feelings of being in control of demanding situations. The extent to which LOC/self-efficacy and Work Life-Balance (WL-B) are significant influences on emotional labour and burnout among FE teachers in the UK requires exploration.

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INTRODUCTION

The 'work-family interface' is a general term relating to the overlap between work, family, leisure and health (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). However, work and family conflict (WFC) is defined as role conflicts wherein taking part in one role interferes with another. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggest that experiencing strain in one role makes it more difficult to fulfil goals in another. In academic papers and books (e.g. Gervais & Millea, 2016), research has focused on work demands and family as being incompatible with work-life balance (WL-B). The demands of personal, professional and family life have equal impotence when WL-B is found. Ford, Heinman and Langkramer point out that gender, time spent at work and family characteristics can cause an imbalance. Gender differences may also be significant due to the different roles males and females occupy, and perceptions of their role identity (Cinamon & Gail, 2002). Saeed and Farooqi's (2014) study investigated the relationship between WLB, job stress and job satisfaction among university teachers in Gujarat, India. The results showed that there is an insignificant relationship between job stress and job satisfaction, whereas work-life balance shares a moderate positive relationship with job satisfaction. Saeed and Farooqi's suggest that the results of the study are helpful for educational institutions as it contributes towards performance improvement. In the UK, the Education and Support Partnership (2019) reported that in

their 2018 Teacher Wellbeing Index, 74% of teaching staff said they were unable to detach themselves from work and this contributed to a negative WLB. The Partnership lists the effects of poor WLB as including: poor relationships, detachment from others, exhaustion, panic attacks, anxiety, lack of sleep, loss of confidence and finally lack of control. Earlier studies that have investigated gender differences in WFC and burnout include that by Robinson and Godbey (1997) who found that females experience higher levels of WFC. Other studies such as those conducted by Frone (2003) and Akitayo (2010) showed no impact of gender on WFC. These studies suggest that it would be unjustified to make the claim that females are always more susceptible to burnout. It is suggested that the conditions of work may be relevant, such as the kinds of support female employees can make use of. However, it is suggested that the personalities of teachers, coupled with their age, may play a significant role in how they cope with job demands.

Family dynamics are no longer as patriarchal as they have been in the past, and Gervais and Millea (2016) pointed out that women in general make significant contributions to the economy, and this assists their wellbeing. Women may have different kinds of responsibilities to men and these may be culturally determined (Anafarta & Kuruüzüm, 2012). The FE sector has more female teaching staff than males at 59.1% versus 40.9% (Further Education College Working Data for England, 2011). Also, according to the Department of Education's report, 'School Workforce in England' (2013), 73.6% of full-time teaching staff are women. However, it is generally believed that the increase in participation of women

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WORK–LIFEBALANCE INTERFACE, EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

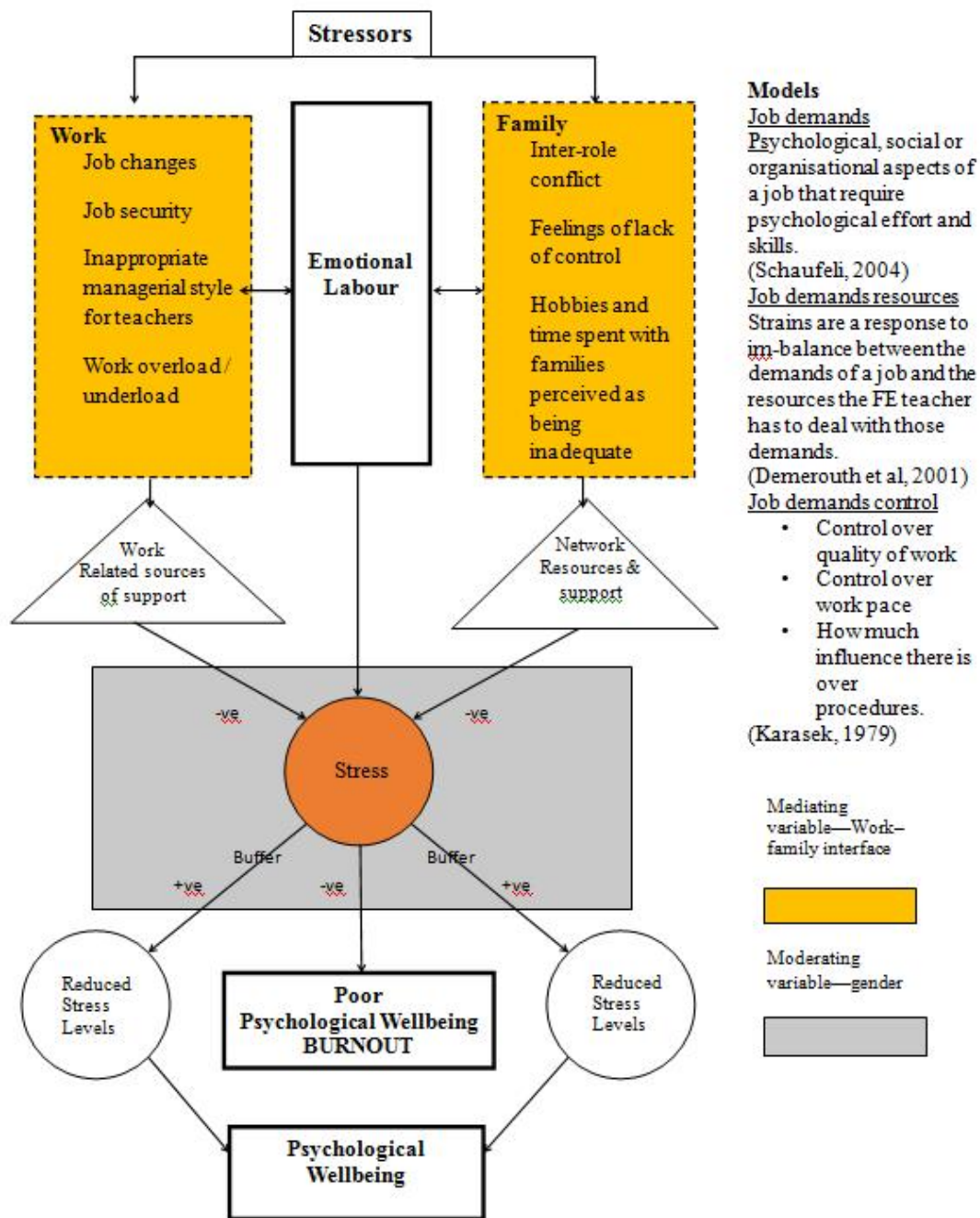


Figure 1. The effects of stressors from work and family on emotional labour and burnout and the effects of social support

in the workforce has raised concerns around WFC. That is, personal resources, e.g. physical and psychological energy, for one role are limited, so fulfilling the requirement of one role will deplete the resources available for the demands of another (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999). There is evidence to support the view that work exerts a more negative impact on non-working life than vice versa (Grzywacz & Demerouti, 2013). Figure 1 illustrates that the interactive effects of work and family demands is mediated by emotional labour, with burnout as a predicted consequence. The model highlights the interactive effects of demands of work and family on experiences of stress and emotional labour. It is envisaged that the extent to which employees experience burnout is determined by the support structures available to them.

Of note is the Karasek (1979) model which advocate that to have control over demands in the workplace, employees must have sufficient personal resources, and employment policies must be suitable so that they are able to work within their capacity. The model is hypothetical and draws on previous research. The effect of support from other staff is important, as this may influence psychological wellbeing. The model suggests there is opportunity for investigating WLB among teachers in FE in circumstances where it is believed that there is an interaction between professional and family life affecting WLB. It is discussed that personal factors of teachers constitute aspects of their individual differences. Following ideas from Karasek’s (1979) model, it is argued that having control over the demands placed on teachers by professional

and family life is a necessary element in maintaining WLB. In this context, the LOC and self-efficacy of teachers is discussed with implications for conducting research to improve WLB among teachers in FE institutions in the UK.

LOC (locus of control) and organisational variables: My working experience in FE and adult education requires that I feel at ease with the requirements of the organisation. This means that I should be approachable to students, manage students' bad behaviour and report it appropriately according to college rules and regulations. It could be that my personality and others like myself find dealing with situations in class and in the environment of the workplace difficult to cope with. Review of the construct LOC shows that there is interaction with variables such as teachers' perception of the workplace and themselves, the job structure, beliefs teachers have, job satisfaction, pupil behaviour, job attitudes and stress levels found in roles. Rotter (1966) identified LOC as a descriptive term identifying those individuals who believe either that outcomes are due to personal factors and so feel in control of the demands of their work, or employees who think that they cannot make progress because of the strength of factors external to them which they cannot control. Research is required that examines the relationship between LOC and job perception. That is, whether internal versus external LOC individuals differ in how they perceive specific job demands.

has not yet been documented. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers Press (2014) reported that 49% of those who responded to a survey pointed out that their employer did too little to meet their mental and emotional wellbeing needs. It is envisaged that this etc, research will aim to make recommendations to managers. Grandey, Diefendorff and Rupp (2013) argued that emotional labour research needs to integrate personality variables into the emotional labour framework to understand the kind of people who can cope with challenging situations without becoming stressed. Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti and Schaufeli (2009) also concluded that individuals who are more able to control emotionally demanding situations at work are more strongly engaged. Research such as that conducted by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) could be extended. They reported teacher burnout to be linked to self-efficacy and LOC. Further research might examine the relationship between emotional labour and stressors, so that suggestions could be made to inform interventions, so as to enhance the psychological wellbeing of FE lecturers. Figure 2 is a hypothetical model which shows the interactive effects of job demands, LOC and self-efficacy on the wellbeing of FE teachers. It is suggested that a lack of control over demands found in teachers' jobs leads to stress, emotional labour and poor psychological wellbeing. Apart from loc and self-efficacy, other personality variables such as 'hardiness, optimism' etc. may

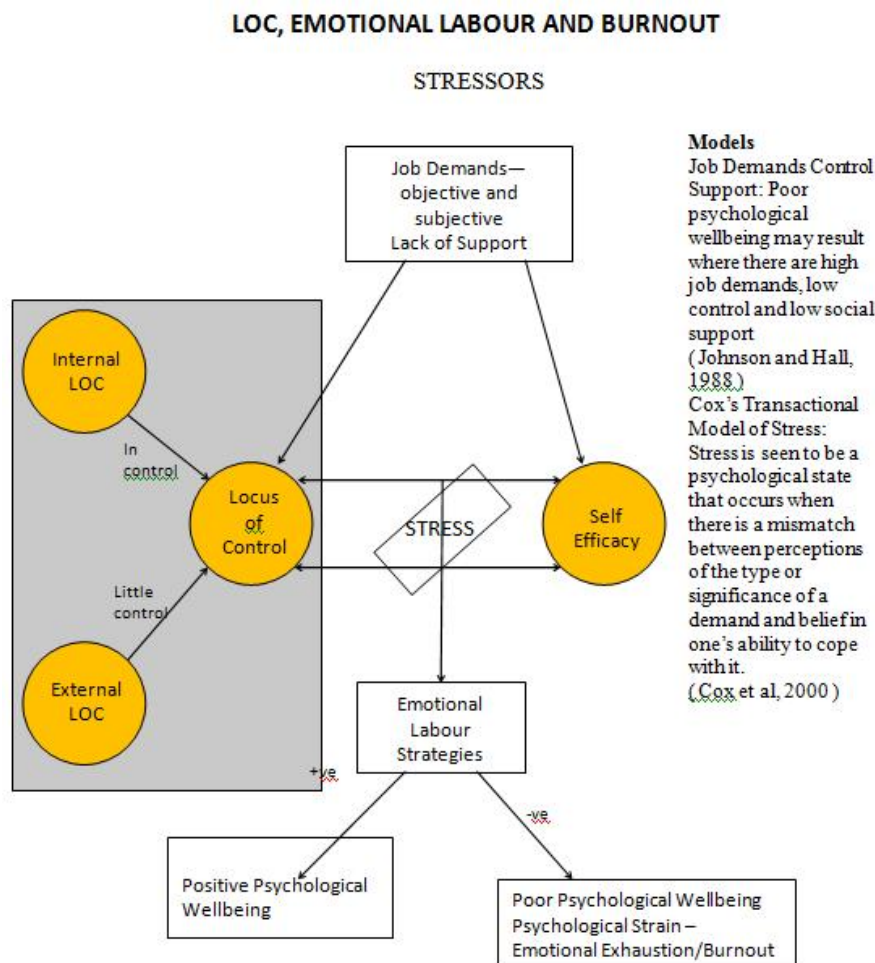


Figure 2: Interactive influences of stressors on LOC and self-efficacy—influences on psychological wellbeing of teachers

Thompson and Wostencroft (2012) explored the experiences of new FE lecturers. They described their main difficulties as being obtaining resources and managing student behaviour, and many felt they were ill-equipped to cope with these challenges. This may be due to managerial practices, but this

be important in determining the extent to which teachers feel in control of demands found at work. This paper argues that LOC and self-efficacy are major variables. The way teachers perceive their workplace is important as this may affect their coping strategies. A teacher who views the environment as full

of conflicts and thinks it is something which cannot be controlled may be prone to feelings of helplessness and lack of wellbeing. The purpose of McIntyre's (1984) research was to investigate the relationship between LOC, as measured by the Nowicki Strickland Adult Scale, and burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). An analysis of the data revealed significant correlations between increasingly external LOC orientation and increased perceptions of burnout, on four of the six subscales of the MBI. This result may be due to how competent teachers rate themselves and their LOC. Scheck and Rhodes (1980) pointed out in their research that teachers who scored better on internal LOC were more likely to see themselves as competent, and this view was upheld by their peers. A study by Conley and You (2014) examined job structuring antecedents on a model of role stress and the moderating effects of LOC on teachers' perceptions of (a) mechanistic/organic job structuring, (b) role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload, and (c) commitment, satisfaction, and intentions to leave the school. Respondents to the survey included teachers in seven comprehensive high schools in Southern California. Results indicated that predicted patterns of relationships were partially moderated by LOC. The study suggests ways to reduce role stress and enhance the work outcomes of teachers through identifying an appropriate job structure.

Furthermore, Kesici (2008) explored the variations in democratic beliefs among teachers based on gender and LOC. The study groups comprised 286 teachers. The results demonstrated that the level of adherence to democratic beliefs on the part of female teachers was significantly higher than that of male teachers, especially in terms of equality and justice. This study found that gender influences a teacher's democratic beliefs, and this effect was found to be statistically low for equality, exceptionally low for freedom, average for justice, and low for the overall dimensions. Observance of democratic values was found to be significantly higher for teachers with internal LOC than for those etc. with external LOC in terms of freedom. And, in terms of LOC, teachers' democratic belief was found to be statistically low for equality, average for independence, low for justice, and average for the overall dimensions. Another investigation of gender and LOC was conducted by Gaus and Ac (2014). The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between internal LOC, job satisfaction and job stress in female head-teachers at primary schools in Makassar, Indonesia. The results of this study revealed that there was a significant correlation between internal LOC etc and job satisfaction and job stress of female head-teachers at elementary schools in Makassar. Investigations are needed to illuminate how teachers with different degrees of burnout perceive stressful situations (either internally or externally) and how they perceive the control of pupil behaviour. Cadavid and Lunenburg (1991) conducted a study exploring whether there is a direct relationship between: (1) LOC and teacher burnout; (2) pupil control ideology and teacher burnout; and (3) LOC and pupil control ideology. To test these hypotheses, operational measures such as the Pupil Control Ideology, the Internal-External LOC Scale, and MBI were used. The study sample consisted of public-school teachers from schools in a large Midwestern USA city. The schools are interracial and cross-cultural centres employing primarily Afro-American, Caucasian, and Hispanic teachers serving students of similar ethnic backgrounds. Results showed that individuals with an external LOC probably have fewer coping strategies than

those with an internal LOC. Findings also suggested that teachers who have a custodial pupil control ideology will most likely also experience more emotional exhaustion etc, depersonalisation, and a lack of personal accomplishment. Teachers with a custodial pupil control ideology also appear to have an external LOC.

In current worldwide movements to promote more effective schools, finding ways to improve teachers' job attitudes and performance is a big concern in policy discussions. Understanding teachers' job attitudes and behaviours seems to be a necessary condition for any improvement effort. Yin (1994) investigated the job attitudes and perceptions of teachers in a sample of Hong Kong secondary schools and compared the findings with those in Western studies. The findings were consistent with those in Western etc. LOC seems to be a powerful indicator of teachers' job attitudes and organisational perceptions. Teachers with a belief in internal control tend to have a more positive job attitude in terms of organisational commitment, intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction, social satisfaction, influence satisfaction, role clarity, and feeling of job challenge. They also tend to have more positive perceptions of the school organisation in terms of principal's leadership organisational structure etc. Lewin's (1943) theory provided an important basis for studying teachers' job behaviours and attitudes. It assumes that a person's behaviour is determined by the interaction between his or her personal characteristics and environmental factors. The influence of environmental factors on teachers' attitudes and behaviours will often depend on how these factors are perceived by the teachers. The attribution literature indicates that LOC is a critical psychological attribute affecting teachers' perceptions of their environment and job attitudes (Lefcourt, 1982; Spector, 1982). For example, Luthans, Black and Taylor (1987) found that internal-external LOC is an important personal attribute related to an individual's organisational commitment. A study conducted by Kay-Cheng (1986) focused on LOC as a moderator of teacher stress in Singapore. A group of lecturers at a technical college and a group of teachers from a secondary school completed the teacher LOC scale. In contrast with the well-known Rotter scale, this scale was developed for use with schoolteachers and deals specifically with their expectations of classroom events and student achievement. Also, instead of the forced choice format used by the Rotter scale, this scale presents 5-point Likert-type items. The subjects in this study also responded to an adapted version of the Wilson Stress Profile for Teachers, with five sources of stress: student behaviour, relationship with the administration, peer relationship, interpersonal conflicts, and physiopsychological symptoms. It was concluded that LOC functions as a moderator of stress in the educational context. Another moderator of stress is self-efficacy. This concept is explored with respect to its influence on emotional labour and burnout among teachers and potential implications for FE teachers in the UK.

Self-efficacy and Organisational Variables: Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their innate ability to achieve goals. Bandura with Bandura (1982) defined it as a personal judgement on 'how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations'. Scott (2008) added that doing worthwhile work, along with the individual's willingness to care actively in an atmosphere of accountability, will increase self-efficacy. Research has

focused on links between self-efficacy, emotional labour, burnout, leadership practices and LOC. Following Grandey's (2000) integrative model etc requires formatting according to paper. of emotional labour, a study conducted by Yin, Huang and Lee (2017) reported that research among Hong Kong primary school teachers showed that surface acting played a dysfunctional role, but deep acting and expression of naturally felt emotion facilitated teacher efficacy. Trust in colleagues was found to be an organisational resource for teachers that helped them to cope with the challenges brought about by the emotional demands of teaching. The results indicate that teachers should perform emotional labour wisely. Extending research on teachers' emotions beyond general educational contexts and Western samples, Lee and Van Vlack (2018) examined how teachers' emotions correlated with their emotional labour strategies and classroom management self-efficacy using an East-Asian sample in an English teaching context. Surface acting (emotional expressions modification) correlated positively with anxiety and frustration, whereas deep acting (internal feelings modification) correlated positively with enjoyment and pride and negatively with anxiety. Enjoyment and anger correlated positively and frustration negatively with classroom management self-efficacy. Enjoyment and frustration were documented as mediators in the relationship between emotional labour strategies and classroom management self-efficacy. The results suggest that deep acting is linked to experiencing positive emotions, which in turn is positively related to classroom management self-efficacy, whereas surface acting is linked to experiencing negative emotions, which in turn relates negatively to classroom management self-efficacy.

Some studies show a relationship between self-efficacy and burnout (Yazdi, Motallebzadeh & Ashraf, 2014). In foreign-language settings, there are some social psychological variables that can highly influence the performance of teachers and learners. One of these important variables in language pedagogy is self-efficacy i.e. 'an individual's confidence in his/her ability to engage in the social interactional tasks necessary to initiate and maintain interpersonal relationships' (Bandura, 2006). Another influential factor that is important in teaching contexts is burnout. Burnout is defined as a result of long-term job-related stress, especially among human service workers such as teachers (Jennett, Harris, & Mesibov, 2003). Yazdi et al utilised qualitative and quantitative methodologies to measure the relationship between the self-efficacy of Iranian English teachers and their feelings of burnout. The result showed that the participants' self-efficacy had a reverse relationship with their burnout. In addition, a significant relationship was observed between teachers' reports of burnout, and their years of experience. Leadership practices and the mediating role of emotional labour strategies are considered relevant to emotional labour and efficacy (Zheng, Yin & Wang, 2018). Research has shown that leadership practices have a negative effect on surface acting and a positive effect on deep acting, expression of naturally felt emotions, and teacher efficacy. Analysis indicated that surface acting and expression of naturally felt emotion significantly mediated the effects of leadership practices on teacher efficacy. The research emphasised the importance of self-efficacy etc in shaping educator practice. Other studies explored the relationship between LOC and teachers' self-efficacy with respect to career success (Smidt, Kammermeyer, Roux, Theisen & Weber, 2018) and academic self-efficacy (Kırmızı & Sarıçoban, 2018). Smidt et al examined whether the

Big Five personality factors (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism), LOC and occupational self-efficacy could predict the career success of preschool teachers in Germany. After controlling for other predictors, internal LOC corresponded with higher objective career success, but neuroticism and conscientiousness corresponded with lower subjective career success. Occupational self-efficacy corresponded with higher subjective career success.

Conclusion

The construct LOC plays a role in teachers' perception of organisational variables. For example, internal LOC is associated with perceptions of democracy, job satisfaction, coping strategies and job attitudes. Those teachers who experience burnout have external LOC but teachers who perceive themselves as competent tend to have internal LOC. Self-efficacy is important in determining the way teachers engage in emotional labour and experience burnout. Those who feel positive emotions will perform deep acting and experience less anxiety consequently. This, coupled with self-efficacy and internal LOC, will reduce feelings of burnout and increase career success. Other personality factors such as hardiness, job commitment, empathy, LOC, and optimism are related to emotional labour, self-esteem, and burnout. Studies have examined the influence of personality hardiness, job involvement and job burnout among teachers from a central university in India (e.g., Azeem, 2010). Job involvement was found to be negatively correlated with depersonalisation and positively with the personal accomplishment dimensions of burnout. Commitment, challenge, control and total personality hardiness were found to be negatively related with emotional exhaustion. However, being committed and passionate about a teaching job can foster either positive or negative effects at different levels (Philipp and Schüpbach, 2010). Fernet, Lavigne, Vallerand and Austin (2014) propose that the types of passion—harmonious or obsessive—affect burnout. Older teachers may suffer from lack of wellbeing if they possess external LOC, but optimism and feelings of self-esteem reduce emotional distress (Jiménez, Montorio & Izal, 2017). The negative effect associated with suppressing emotions in the teaching profession has yet to be fully discussed among FE lecturers. It is therefore apparent that that a combination of variables can influence teachers' wellbeing and the way these variables and how self-efficacy and LOC affect work-life balance requires exploration. This is expected to take place among teachers within the FE sector.

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