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Emotional Labour and Teaching

The Moderating role of Emotional Intelligence on the relationship between
Emotional Labour and Psychological Wellbeing of Teachers.

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Abstract

Teachers can be seen as emotional practitioners, they constantly practice *emotional labour* which is supposed to be related to *burnout complaints*. *Burnout* is a large health problem within the Dutch education sector compared to other occupations. Surprisingly, the majority of teachers do feel engaged in their job. Therefore, this study among 238 Dutch teachers investigated the association between on the one hand the two different aspects of *emotional labour*, *surface acting* and *deep acting*, and on the other hand *burnout complaints* and *work engagement*. *Surface acting* is displaying the required emotions for the job that are not actually felt. *Deep acting* is trying to really feel the required emotions for the job. Furthermore, the moderating role of *emotional intelligence* for these associations was investigated. The results of this research provide partial support for the hypotheses. As anticipated, *surface acting* is positively related to *burnout complaints* among Dutch teachers and negatively with *work engagement*. Unexpectedly, *deep acting* is not significantly associated with *burnout* and *work engagement*. Furthermore, *emotional intelligence* did not influence these associations. So according to this research, *emotional intelligence* does not help teachers to cope with *surface acting*. Implications for further research, and possible explanations of the results, are discussed.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, surface acting, deep acting, burnout, work engagement, teaching



Introduction

Burnout is a large health problem within the Dutch education sector; one out of five teacher's experiences *burnout complaints*, compared to one out of seven employees in other occupations (Centraal Bureau van de Statistiek (CBS), 2015). Due to *burnout complaints*, teachers feel less motivated and most of them are less enjoying their job. *Burnout complaints* among teachers are caused by a disbalance between their job characteristics, such as *workload*, *pupil misbehaviour*, lack of *colleague social support* and poor *job control* (Schaufeli & Bergers, 1992; Aloe, Amp & Shanahan, 2014; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The number of teachers with *burnout complaints* is still increasing instead of decreasing in the Netherlands (Hooftman, Mars, Janssen, Vroome, Ramaekers & Bossche, 2018; CBS, 2015). Therefore, it is interesting to take a deep dive into the job characteristic that are related to *burnout complaints* among teachers.

However, it is crucial to note that the majority of teachers still feel engaged in their job (Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2006). Engaged teachers feel vigorous and dedicated in their work. Teachers become more engaged in teaching if they experience resources like; *job control*, *colleague social support*, *supervisory support* and *innovativeness* in the school climate (Hakanen et al., 2006). The conservation of resources theory (COR theory) by Hobfoll (2001) suggests that *burnout complaints* occur under three conditions. Firstly, when resources are lost, secondly, when resources are threatened and lastly, if an employee invests in resources but does not gain the expected effort. A lack of resources within the job, and therefore less feelings of *work engagement*, leads to more *burnout complaints* (Hakanen et al., 2006). A better understanding of important resources for teachers, and their relationship with feelings of *work engagement* and *burnout complaints*, is further investigated in this research.

Therefore, we need to gain more knowledge about the impact of the specific job characteristics for teachers. According to Hochschild (1983), *burnout complaints* among employees are related to jobs with high demands of *emotional labour*. *Emotional labour* is the degree of dissonance between the emotions that are felt, and the specific expressed emotions that the job requires. Teaching is a profession that requires constant interaction with pupils. Teachers are expected to inspire their pupils, hold their attention and ensure a proper learning environment within the classes. Furthermore, they need to express specific emotions and behaviour towards the pupils. Teachers need to control their own emotions and express emotions that are not in line with their own feelings (Kinman, Wray & Strange, 2011). Teachers constantly practice



emotional labour. Therefore, it is an important job characteristic to further explore in this research.

Findings in the literature show conflicting results for the effects of *emotional labour* on psychological wellbeing. Kinman, Wray & Strange (2011) investigated the concept *emotional labour* among teachers. They found out that *emotional labour* creates more emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but that it increases feelings of personal accomplishment. The following question comes to mind; why does *emotional labour* has a negative and positive effect on the psychological wellbeing of teachers.

Therefore, we need to take a look at the different aspects of *emotional labour*. Especially, the two *emotional labour* aspects that were discussed in the current research; *surface acting* and *deep acting*. *Surface acting* is displaying the required emotions for the job that are not actually felt. *Deep acting* is trying to really feel the required emotions for the job (Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild (1983) argued in her research among service employees, both aspects are detrimental for one's health. However, other research found that *deep acting* creates feelings of *work engagement* and *job satisfaction*. This is because employees could solve this emotional dissonance by themselves, and remind themselves of the meaningfulness of their job (Zhang & Zhu, 2008; Yagil, 2012; Goldberg, Grandey & Lee, 2007). On the contrary, Bono and Vey (2005) mentioned that *deep acting* only decreases the negative experiences of *surface acting*, and does not significantly influence feelings of *job satisfaction*. These inconsistent findings in the two studies mentioned above, clarify how important it is to study the *relationship* between *surface acting* and *deep acting* versus *burnout complaints* and *work engagement*.

It is interesting to note that Hochschild (1983) declared emotionally intelligent employees to be more able to understand the causes and effects of their emotional experiences. They are therefore more able to design a tactic to cope with emotional demands. This could also mean that emotionally intelligent teachers would better cope with *emotional labour*. Therefore, this current research investigates the moderating role of *emotional intelligence* for the association between on the one hand *surface acting* and *deep acting*, and on the other hand *burnout complaints* and feelings of *work engagement* among teachers.



Burnout complaints and work engagement

Burnout is an individual experience that arises in the work environment. It is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors at work. Employees who experience *burnout complaints* experience feelings of *emotional exhaustion*, *depersonalization* and *reduced personal accomplishment* (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). *Emotional exhaustion* refers to the feeling of being exhausted due to demands and stressors in the job. *Depersonalization* is an attempt to create more distance between oneself and the working role, by developing feelings of cynicism towards the job. *Reduced personal accomplishment* means that employees feel less efficient and dissatisfied about their performance. Employees mostly experience *emotional exhaustion* as a symptom of *burnout* which displays the feeling of stress (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001).

Burnout complaints occur when the job characteristics, job demands and job resources are not in balance (Maslach et al., 2001). Teachers feel stressed in their job as a result of several specific job characteristics. First of all, teachers need to deal with pupils who misbehave, and teachers can experience bad relationships with colleagues and school leaders. Furthermore, teaching requires different roles, also outside the classroom, such as directing school plays and organizing school camps (Schaufeli & Bergers, 2001). Moreover, teachers experience a high amount of workload and lastly, teachers constantly practice *emotional labour* (Kinman et al., 2011).

Work-related psychological wellbeing is categorized in two opposites, *burnout* and *work engagement*. *Work engagement* is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by *vigor*, *dedication*, and *absorption* (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). *Vigor* is characterized by experiencing high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, and the willingness of an employee to invest in the job. *Dedication* refers to the sense of enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge in the job. *Absorption* is the ability of an employee to feel concentrated and happily engrossed in the job (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). *Vigor* and *dedication* are the opposites of *emotional exhaustion* and *depersonalization* (Hakanen et al., 2006). Much research investigated the influence of *emotional labour* on *job satisfaction* (Zhang & Zhu, 2008; Phillipp & Heinz, 2010). However, engaged teachers do feel satisfied, but satisfied teachers do not necessarily feel engaged. This is because *work engagement* focuses on the teachers



experienced energy (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). Therefore, the current research chose to focus on *work engagement* instead of *job satisfaction*.

Emotional labour

Teachers can be seen as emotional practitioners; teaching requires effective management of one's own emotions and the ability to affect the emotional state of others. Teachers constantly practice *emotional labour*. *Emotional labour* is firstly conceptualized by Hochschild (1983), based on her studies of cabin crew. Hochschild (1983) operationalized *emotional labour* as the degree of dissonance between the emotions that are felt, and the specific expressed emotions that the job requires. Further research has found that emotional labour occurs in different human service occupational groups (Kinman et al., 2011). Shortly, it is the management of one's own feelings in order to fit the working role. Because of that, *emotional labour* often involves the display of fake or inauthentic emotions performed by, in this case, teachers (Hochschild, 1983). *Emotional labour* consists of four different behaviours: the first aspect is *surface acting*, when an employee displays an emotion that is not actually felt. An example for *surface acting* is when a teacher acts sympathetic towards a pupil that reads slowly, despite the fact that the teacher is actually feeling annoyed. The second aspect is *deep acting*, which is the effort that the employee undertakes to actually feel a required emotion. Within the same example, the teacher will take the effort to really feel sympathy towards the child. Employees are not always conscious when they perform *deep acting*. Therefore, the process can also be described as an automatic emotion regulation. The third aspect is *surface acting – hiding*, which entails that employees always need to show required positive emotions in their job. This does not occur while teaching, because sometimes a teacher needs to react angry towards the pupils with the aim to better teach the pupils. A job that does require *surface acting - hiding*, is for example the job of a Cliniclown. The last aspect of *emotional labour* is *emotional consonance*, the feelings of the employee are in line with the expected emotions during the job. The teacher will actually feel the expected emotions, without taking any effort (Hochschild, 1983).

This current research will not focus on all four aspects of *emotional labour*. *Surface acting - hiding* is less interesting to investigate because teachers are not required to only show positive emotions during their job. Furthermore, earlier research barely focused on investigating the role of *emotional consonance*. Researchers assumed that it does not affect employees'



wellbeing because employees do not need to take any effort for it (Briët, Näring, Brouwers, & Van Droffelaar, 2005). So, a teacher does not have to make an effort to experience *emotional consonance*. Therefore, this current research will investigate the two aspects of emotional labour that teachers need to put effort in, namely *surface acting* and *deep acting*.

Researchers are inconsistent about the specific impact that *surface acting* and *deep acting* have on the psychological wellbeing of teachers. Hochschild (1983) argued that both aspects are detrimental for the health of service employees. This is because *surface acting* creates emotional dissonance and *deep acting* creates alienation from one's own feelings. However, Truta (2013) stated that teachers engage in both aspects of *emotional labour*, because the required emotions are part of their professional identity. So, if teachers succeed in showing these emotions, they succeed in being a professional.

Other cross-sectional studies investigated the different aspects of *emotional labour* and indeed found that *surface acting* is health-detrimental and causes *burnout complaints* (Zhang & Zhu, 2008; Yagil, 2012; Prati, Liu, Perrewé and Ferris, 2009). Surface actors put on a mask to consciously hide their own feelings and fake the required emotions. The described emotional dissonance and the consciousness effort teachers need to take result in stress, depression, cynicism and/or emotional exhaustion among teachers (Zhang & Zhu, 2008; Bono & Vey, 2005; Prati, Liu, Perrewé and Ferris, 2009).

While *deep acting*, employees influence their own emotions to feel the required emotions for the demanding situation. This process also takes effort, but after successfully feeling the required emotion, the emotional dissonance of the teachers is resolved (Zhang & Zhu, 2008). The discussion in research lies in the effect that *deep acting* has on psychological wellbeing. Hochschild (1983) and Kinman et al., (2011) argue that the undertaken effort to actually feel the required emotion costs too much energy. According to them, this will result in *burnout complaints*.

Nevertheless, according to Yagil (2012) employees feel engaged in *deep acting* because they adopt an empathetic view for customers and remind themselves of the meaningfulness of their job. For teachers, this could be translated to more empathy for the pupils and their meaningful learning process. According to Zhang & Zhu (2008), *deep acting* result in positive effects because, the effort that the teachers take to feel the required emotion, causes their working role to match with their personal role. Furthermore, Goldberg, Grandey & Lee (2007) considered



according to the COR theory that *deep acting* helps restore resources. This is because it helps teachers to feel more authentic, and this authenticity is positively perceived by the pupils.

For the current research, it is expected that *surface acting* is positively associated with feelings of *burnout complaints* due to the emotional dissonance that teachers experience. While looking at *deep acting*, teachers do not experience emotional dissonance due to their effort to feel the required emotion. Their heart and mind are in balance. Therefore, it is expected that *deep acting* is positively associated with feelings of *work engagement*.

Emotional intelligence as moderator

This study also aimed to investigate if there is an individual characteristic that helps teachers to better cope with *emotional labour*. Therefore, the current research investigated if *emotional intelligence* could moderate the association between *surface acting* and *deep acting*, and *burnout complaints* and *work engagement*. Law, Wong & Song (2004) found in their research that *emotional intelligence* is distinct from personality. The definition of *emotional intelligence* by Davies, Stankow & Roberts (1998) is less focused on personality compared to other definitions (Law et al., 2004). Therefore, this definition was used for the current research

Emotional intelligence is the appraisal and expression of emotions within oneself or others, plus the regulation of emotions within oneself. Furthermore, it contains the ability to use emotion to facilitate performance. Davies and his colleagues (1998) developed a four-dimensional definition of *emotional intelligence*: 1. *Appraisal and expression of emotions of oneself*. This relates to the ability of an individual to understand and express his or her deep emotions. Teachers who have a good ability within this area are able to acknowledge and understand their own emotions, also while teaching. 2. *Appraisal and recognition of emotion in others*. This relates to the ability of a person to understand and perceive the emotions of others around him or her. Teachers who are able to do so, are more sensitive for the emotions of their pupils, and are also able to predict the pupil's emotional responses. 3. *Regulation of emotion in oneself*. This relates to the ability of a person to regulate his or her own emotions and therefore experience less instability in their emotional reactions. So, teachers who are able to do this will be consequent and stable in their reactions towards pupils despite other personal situations. 4. *Use of emotion to facilitate performance*. Individuals with a high level of this ability are able to direct their emotions in a positive way to receive their wanted performance. For instance;



constantly motivating themselves to help the pupils getting a good grade (Davies et al., 1998). This research focuses on *emotional intelligence* as a whole because the four dimensions together contain *emotional intelligence*. In short, high levels of *emotional intelligence* help people to deal with their own emotions and to process emotional information.

It is interesting to investigate the moderating role of *emotional intelligence* on the associations due to several reasons. First of all, research argued that emotionally intelligent service employees are better able to align their levels of emotional engagement with the emotional demands of the situation. This makes *surface acting* feel less socially inappropriate and therefore less stressful (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988). According to the research of Sutton & Rafaeli (1988), it is assumed that teachers who are highly emotionally intelligent, feel less stress when they need to show an expected emotion in front of the class. Furthermore, emotionally intelligent people are more likely to understand the causes and consequences of their emotional experiences. Therefore, they are capable to create a strategy to manage and cope with *surface acting* (Hochschild, 1983). In addition, this decreases stress because teachers better understand how they need to act in front of the classroom. Moreover, people with high levels of *emotional intelligence* are able to view certain situations from various perspectives. They are able to view their own emotional behaviour from an organizational point of view and from of a personal one. They will better cope with stressful situations because they separate this stress from their personal emotional behaviour (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Lastly, the research of Prati, Liu, Perrewé & Ferris (2009) found that *emotional intelligence* weakens the relationship between *surface acting* and *strain* among service employees. The emotional intelligence level of the employees empowered them to cope with the demands of the customers.

Prati, Liu, Perrewé & Ferris (2009) stated that future research regarding the moderating role of *emotional intelligence* on *emotional labour* is needed. They wonder if it is possible that emotionally intelligent employees are better able to facilitate the required emotions instead of acting them. They recommend investigating the moderating role of *emotional intelligence* on the association between *deep acting* and wellbeing. These recommendations for future research by Prati and her colleagues (2009) have been adopted by the current research.



Hypotheses

Teachers experience more *burnout complaints* compared to other occupations. Therefore, the aim of the current study is to gain more insight into the associations between on the one hand the specific job characteristics *surface acting* and *deep acting*, and on the other hand *burnout complaints* and *work engagement*. *Surface acting* and *deep acting* require different emotional regulatory skills and are both expected to be associated with different outcomes (Zhang & Zhu, 2008; Yagil, 2012; Prati et., 2009; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007). It is expected that *surface acting* is positively associated with *burnout complaints* and negatively with feelings of *work engagement*. This is because of the emotional dissonance teachers experience while *surface acting* (Hochschild, 1983). While *deep acting*, teachers take the effort to really feel the required emotion and therefore do not experience this emotional dissonance (Zhang & Zhu, 2008). It is expected that *deep acting* is positively associated with feelings of *work engagement* and negatively with *burnout complaints*.

Teachers with higher levels of *emotional intelligence* can better recognize, regulate, use and express their personal emotions and the required work emotions. Therefore, it seems that higher levels of *emotional intelligence* help teachers to cope with *emotional labour*. It was expected that *emotional intelligence* will act as a moderator to influence the associations between *emotional labour* and teachers' wellbeing (Hochschild, 1983; Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Prati et al., 2009). The following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: *Emotional intelligence* weakens the positive association between *surface acting* and *burnout complaints* among Dutch teachers.

H2: *Emotional intelligence* weakens the negative association between *surface acting* and feelings of *work engagement* among Dutch teachers.

H3: *Emotional intelligence* boosts the positive association between *deep acting* and feelings of *work engagement* among Dutch teachers.

H4: *Emotional intelligence* weakens the negative association between *deep acting* and *burnout complaints* among Dutch teachers.

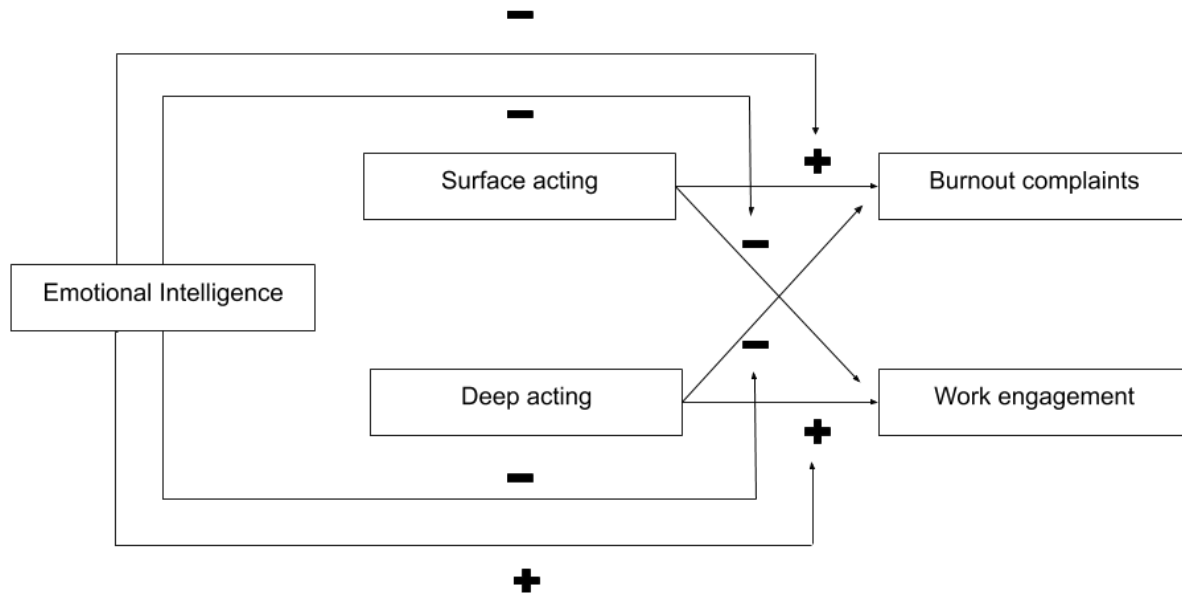


Figure 1. Visual representation of the model that will be tested.

Method

Sample and procedure

This research contained a quantitative cross-sectional design. Questionnaires were used to gather data which was statistically analysed to test the hypotheses. The advantage of a quantitative research is that it is easy to replicate or repeat, giving the high reliability (Field, 2013). The questionnaire was distributed among Dutch primary school teachers within the age of 21 till 65, ($M = 40.6$, $SD = 12.1$). In total, 346 people filled in the survey. However, 108 participants with missing values were deleted, thus the data of 238 participants was analysed. The sample consists of 218 women (91.6%) and 20 men (8.4%). All participants were teachers, 39 (16.4%) taught at primary schools, 154 (64.7%) at secondary schools, 25 (10.5%) at MBO schools, 3 (1.3%) taught at a HBO schools and 15 participants taught elsewhere. The questionnaire was taken in the spring (April) before the spring break. Also, the working hours of the participants differed. 67 (28.2%) of the teachers worked 40 hours, 70 (29.4%) teachers worked 32 hours or more, 95 (39.9%) teachers worked 32 hours or less and 6 (2.5%) teachers were unemployed and none of the teachers were incapacitated to work.

Participants were recruited in specific Facebook groups for teachers, for example the Facebook group for French language teachers. A Facebook user needs to send a request before



the teacher is allowed to enter the group. In my request, I stated that I was a student who did a research about teaching and psychological wellbeing. Furthermore, one primary school in Bilthoven and one secondary school in Waalwijk were reached via email. In the introduction of the questionnaire it was stated that the questionnaire would last 10 minutes and that the subject was about emotions in the workplace. Furthermore, there was explicitly stated that the data would be treated confidentially and anonymously. Participation was voluntary with no incentives offered. The questionnaire is conducted in Qualtrics, participant could easily fill in the questionnaire on a computer or mobile device.

Measurement and operationalization

Independent variables

Surface acting and *deep acting* were measured with the Dutch Questionnaire on Emotional Labor (D-QEL) of Briët, Näring, Brouwers, & van Droffelaar (2005). This research measured with the reliable subscales *surface acting* (5-items, for example '*Ik zet een masker op om voor mijn werk de juiste emoties te tonen*', $\alpha = .828$) and *deep acting* (3-item, like, '*Ik werk er hard aan om de emoties te voelen die ik moet laten zien*', $\alpha = .882$). The statements needed to be answered with a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*never*), 3 (*sometimes*) and 5 (*always*).

Dependent variables

The variable *burnout complaints* was measured with the Dutch version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory: de Utrechtse Burnout Schaal voor Leerkrachten (UBOS-L) of Schaufeli and Dierendonck (2000). This translation is specified for the occupation of teaching. The questionnaire consists of 22-items with a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*never*), 4 (*sometimes*) to 7 (*always*). The questionnaire is divided in three subscales. The first subscale measured *emotional exhaustion*; the feeling of being empty due to the teachers' job. (8-items, such as '*Ik voel me mentaal uitgeput door mijn werk*'). The second subscale measured *depersonalization*; an indifferent and negative attitude towards teaching (7-items; '*Ik heb het gevoel dat ik sommige leerlingen te onpersoonlijk behandel*'). The third subscale measured *personal competence*; if the teacher feels able to have contact with the pupils and colleagues (7-items, for example '*Ik heb het gevoel dat ik door mijn werk het leven van anderen op een positieve manier beïnvloed*') (Schaufeli & Dierendonck, 2000). This research investigated if teachers experience *burnout*



complaints by using the UBOS-L as a whole, and not by measuring the subscales separately. Yagil (2012) also had the aim to investigate the effect of *emotional labour* on *burnout* instead of on the different symptoms of *burnout*. The UBOS-L was reliable in this research. The Cronbach's Alpha of the 22 items was .898.

Work engagement was measured with the Dutch questionnaire Utrechtse Bevlogenheid Schaal (UBES) of Schaufeli & Bakker (2004). The questionnaire measures the three subscales of *work engagement* which all consist of 5-items. The first subscale measured *vigor*, characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working; '*Op mijn werk bruis ik van energie*'. The second subscale measured *dedication*, this is the sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge regarding the job; '*Ik vind het werk dat ik doe nuttig en zinvol*'. The last subscale measured *absorption*, which is characterized by being fully concentrated and engrossed in the work; '*Als ik aan het werk ben, dan vliegt de tijd voorbij*' (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The questions were measured with the same 7-point Likert scale as the UBOS-L (15 items; $\alpha = .928$). *Work engagement* is in this research also measured altogether, instead of separating the scale into subscales. Yagil (2012) also did this in her research.

Moderator

Emotional intelligence was measured with the Dutch translation of the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) (Law et al., 2004; Libbrecht, Beuckelaer, Lievens & Rockstuhl, 2014). The Dutch translation was obtained by an email request to Filip Lievens, who gained permission for the translation of the questions from the initial researchers. The questionnaire was constructed based on the four-dimensional definition of Davies et al., (1998) and measures *emotional intelligence* altogether. The questionnaire consists of 16 items, 4 for each dimension; *Self-Emotions Appraisal* ('*Ik weet meestal waarom ik bepaalde gevoelens heb*'), *Others-Emotions Appraisal* ('*Ik merk emoties van anderen gemakkelijk op*'), *Use of Emotion* ('*Ik motiveer mezelf*') and *Regulation of Emotion* ('*Ik kan mijn eigen emoties goed onder controle houden*'). The participants needed to answer a reliable 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly agree*), 3 (*neutral*), 5 (*strongly agree*), (22 items; $\alpha = .774$).

The aim of using this *emotional intelligence* scale is to gain information about the emotional intelligence level of the participants, not gaining information per different subscale. Therefore, the *emotional intelligence* scale was used altogether, just like Prati and her colleagues



(2009) did in their research. Besides, it was also the aim of Law et al., (2004) to conduct a scale to measure *emotional intelligence* as a whole.

Statistical analysis

Firstly, descriptive analyses were performed. Secondly, the association between *surface acting* and *burnout complaints* on the one hand, and *deep acting* and *work engagement* on the other hand, were tested with Pearson correlations. For further investigation, two multiple regression analyses were performed, with as dependent variables *burnout complaints* and *work engagement* and as independent variables *surface acting* and *deep acting*. After that, the moderating effect of *emotional intelligence* on the direct relations was investigated using the PROCESS-Macro Model 1 by Andrew F. Hayes (Hayes, 2017). All variables were interval level. The analyses were performed in IBM SPSS Statistics 24.

Data preparation

The data needed to be prepared before running the analyses. Firstly, the participants who did not fill in the entire questionnaire, or did not seriously fill in the questionnaire, were removed (108 participants). After that, the data was checked for any outlier per variable, which resulted in the outcome that no data needed to be removed. For a correct interpretation of the regression analyses, all variables were changed into z-scores because of the different Likert scales in the questionnaire. Besides, the demographic variables were changed into the right measurement scales.

Before testing the hypotheses, five different Factor Analyses were conducted to examine the construct validity of all 5 (in)dependent variables, *burnout complaints* (UBOS-L), *work engagement* (UBES), *surface acting* (subscale D-QEL), *deep acting* (subscale D-QEL) and *emotional intelligence* (WLEIS) (Briët et al., 2005; Schaufeli & Dierendonck, 2000; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Libbrecht et al., 2014). The factor analyses showed that the scales of *surface acting* and *deep acting* both contained out of one factor component. The factor analyses of the scales *work engagement*, *burnout complaints* and *emotional intelligence* showed that these scales had more factor components, but all items of the scale loaded on the first unrotated factor.

Furthermore, Reliability Analyses were conducted to assure that all the items per measurement scale were reliable. All scales had a high Cronbach's Alpha, which means that no



items needed to be deleted. Thereafter, all the items per variable were added to create variables with just one item.

Results

Descriptive analysis

Table 1 represents the descriptive statistics. For the first impression of the data, a Pearson correlation test was performed and analysed, showed in table 2. The correlation between *surface acting* and *burnout complaints* is significantly positive ($r = .53$). Within the correlations is recognized that *deep acting* significantly negative correlates with *work engagement* ($r = -.13$) and significantly positive with *burnout complaints* ($r = .29$). Furthermore, *deep acting* and *surface acting* significantly positively correlate. There is no significant correlation found for the demographic questions (gender, age, working hours, and type of school) and any of the study variables. Therefore, the demographic variables were not included in the analyses by way of control variables.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics and Pearson's Correlations* (N=238)

	M	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
5 point Likert scale							
1. Surface acting	2.08	0.70	-				
2. Deep acting	1.79	0.90	.52**	-			
3. Emotional Intelligence	3.79	0.38	-.12	-.11	-		
7 point Likert scale							
4. Burnout complaints	2.77	0.73	.53**	.29**	-.27**	-	
5. Work engagement	4.98	0.91	-.29**	-.13*	.39**	-.68**	-

Note, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Multiple regression analyses

The most important statistical data is represented in table 2, significant with an alpha level of .05. All variables were first transformed into z-scores. The first multiple regression analysis contained *burnout complaints* as dependent variable, and *surface acting* and *deep acting* as independent variables. The model showed for that only *surface acting* is significant positively



related to *burnout complaints* (H1), $F(1, 236) = 45,591, p < .05$. The regression coefficient is .52 and significant, $t(237) = 8.04, p < .05$. H4 was not significant, *deep acting* was not significantly associated with *burnout complaints*, $t(237) = 0.25, p > 0.05$. Furthermore, *surface acting* and *deep acting* explained 27.9% of the variance of this sample.

The second multiple regression analysis contained *work engagement* as dependent variable, and *surface acting* and *deep acting* as independent variables. The analysis does not confirm H3. *Deep acting* is not significant positively related with *work engagement* $F(1, 236) = 11.24, p < .05$. Furthermore, the analysis showed proof for H2, there is a significant negative association between *surface acting* and *work engagement*, $t(237) = -4.26, p < .05$. Together, the independent variables explained 8.7% of the variance of this sample.

Tabel 2. The most important statistical data for the association of *surface acting* and *deep acting* on psychological wellbeing (N=238).

	Burnout complaints			Work engagement		
	R^2	β	t	R^2	β	t
Surface acting	.28	.52	8.03*	.09	-.31*	-4.26*
Deep acting	.28	.02	.25	.09	.03	0.43

Note. * $p < 0.05$.

Moderation analyses

The moderating role of *emotional intelligence* for all hypotheses was investigated with the PROCESS-Macro Model 1 of Hayes (2017). The results are represented in table 3. To investigate the first hypothesis, the analyses contained *surface acting* as independent variable, *deep acting* as a covariate, *emotional intelligence* as moderator and *burnout complaints* as dependent variable. The results showed that *emotional intelligence* was not a significant moderator for this association, $t(237) = -.46, p = ns$. Secondly, H2 was measured with *surface acting* as independent variable, *deep acting* as covariate, *work engagement* as dependent variable and *emotional intelligence* as moderator. These results were also not significant, $t(237) = .37, p = ns$. For H3, the analysis was performed with *deep acting* as independent variable, *surface acting*



as covariate, *burnout complaints* as dependent variable and *emotional intelligence* as moderator. *Emotional intelligence* did not significantly moderate the association, $t(237) = .29, p = \text{ns}$. Lastly, H4 was measured with *deep acting* as independent variable, *surface acting* as covariate, *burnout complaints* as dependent variable and *emotional intelligence* as moderator. Also these results were not significant, $t(237) = .07, p = \text{ns}$.

Table 3. Results of the moderation analysis of emotional intelligence on the associations between surface acting and deep acting, and burnout complaints and work engagement

Burnout complaints	β	SE	t	p
Surface acting * Emotional intelligence	-.04	0.09	-.46	.65
Deep acting * Emotional intelligence	.03	0.1	.28	.78
Work engagement	β	SE	t	p
Surface acting * Emotional intelligence	.05	0.12	.38	.71
Deep acting * Emotional intelligence	.01	0.13	.07	.95

Note. * $p < 0.05$.

Discussion

This research investigates the associations between *surface acting* and *deep acting* on the one hand, and *burnout complaints* and *work engagement* among Dutch teachers on the other hand. To further explain the individual differences between teachers, this research investigates the moderating role of *emotional intelligence* on these previous associations. It was hypothesized that *emotional intelligence* weakens the positive association between *surface acting* and *burnout complaints*. Furthermore, it was expected that *emotional intelligence* boosts the positive association between *deep acting* and *work engagement*. The results of this research provide partial support for the hypotheses. As anticipated, *surface acting* is positively related to *burnout complaints* and negatively to *work engagement* among teachers (H1, H2). However, the result that *deep acting* is not significantly related to *burnout complaints* or *work engagement* (H3, H4) was unexpected. Moreover, *emotional intelligence* did not influence any association.



In conclusion, Dutch teachers do experience *burnout complaints* in relation with performing *surface acting* in the job. Their performance in *deep acting* is not related with their psychological wellbeing. Besides, the *emotional intelligence* level of teachers does not help them to better cope with *surface acting*.

Associations burnout complaints and work engagement

Within this research, only *surface acting* has a significant positive association with *burnout complaints*. This result is in line with the research of Prati et al., (2009), that showed that there is an association between *surface acting* and *strain*.

It is remarkable that the results of the Pearson's correlation test show that *deep acting* and *surface acting* significantly positively correlate. On the one hand, it is plausible that *deep acting* and *surface acting* correlate because both are aspects of *emotional labour*. However, according to Hochschild's research, mentioned before, *surface acting* and *deep acting* are the opposite of each other. *Surface acting* does create emotional dissonance and *deep acting* is more of an automatic emotion regulation (Hochschild, 1983). It is possible that teachers are therefore not conscious of their performance in *deep acting*. Because of that, a self-report measurement might not be the best manner to analyse *deep acting* if the participant is not aware of his or her own behaviour. This might be the reason that both aspects correlated positively. For future research, field research or qualitative research with interviews is recommended.

Furthermore, the correlations between *deep acting* and *burnout complaints*, and *deep acting* and *work engagement* are significant. *Deep acting* significantly positively correlates with *burnout complaints* and significantly negatively with *work engagement*. This is not in line with the earlier research of Yagil (2012) who stated that *deep acting* results in more *work engagement*. The finding of this research is more in line with the suggestion of Hochschild (1983) that *deep acting* alienates employee's true self. Further research is needed to investigate the statement of Hochschild (1983), for example by investigating the relationship between the emotional working role and the emotional personal role. If a teacher is not able to align with both roles, an inner role conflict can occur.

So, in this study, significant correlations were found between *deep acting*, *burnout complaints* and *work engagement*. However, with *surface acting* as an extra variable in the multiple regression analyses, the associations for *deep acting* were not significant anymore. This



is probably because *surface acting* and *deep acting* are significantly positive correlated. *Surface acting* consumes almost all of the variance of the sample, so it takes over most of the effects of *deep acting* on the dependent variables. So, a multiple regression analysis fits the independent variable *surface acting* better than *deep acting*.

The moderating role of emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence helps teachers to cope with their own emotions and the process of absorbing emotional information (Law et al., 2004). Teachers need to practice *emotional labour* every day in front of their classroom (Kinman et al., 2011). It was assumed that the *emotional intelligence* level of teachers could help them coping with the effort of *emotional labour*. This is because the teacher would then better understand why, when and how they need to show the expected emotions in specific situations. However, the results of this research are not significant for the moderating role of *emotional intelligence* between *emotional labour* and teachers' wellbeing. All hypotheses are rejected.

Still, it is remarkable that the research of Prati et al., (2009) discovered significant moderating effects of *emotional intelligence* on the relationship between *surface acting* and *strain*. The size of their sample is the same as this current study, but the participants of their sample were working in a bookstore. It could be that the effect of *emotional intelligence* differs between various occupations. The interaction that teachers have with their pupils is constant and lasts more than any other type of client-employee relation in jobs (Truti, 2014). Therefore, it could be that teachers are more emotionally attached to their pupils than sales worker to their customers. Further research is needed to investigate the impact that *emotional intelligence* has on the different client-employee relations.

Limitations and future research

This research has several limitations. First of all, the requirement of the regression analysis regarding an equal distribution around the regressions line, is partly violated. The variance of *surface acting* on *burnout complaints* was a bit diffused around the regression line, which means that the regression coefficient is less precise. The distribution around the regression line results in the fact that the regression coefficient is a bit imprecise for the relationship between *surface acting* and *burnout complaints*. The results are still useful for future research but, it needs to be



interpreted more carefully. The distribution around the regression line for *deep acting* was not linear within this sample. This could be the reason that *deep acting* does not significantly relate with *burnout complaints* and *work engagement* in the multiple regression analyses. Future research could prevent this by creating a preselection of groups who do perform *deep acting*, and with another measurement for *deep acting*.

Moreover, this research showed that more participants felt engaged to their job than feeling burned out, which might have influenced the outcome of this research. Only 35 percent of the participants experienced 'once in a while' *burnout complaints*, 5% experienced it 'sometimes' and nobody in this sample experienced 'often' *burnout complaints*. This is in contrast with 51% of the participants that 'often' experienced feelings of *work engagement*. The scales that were used to conduct the survey are all valid and reliable within this research, so the low experience of *burnout complaints* is due to the sample. An explanation for this specific result is that the participants are approached via cluster sampling, by contacting two schools and several active Facebook groups. If teachers are voluntarily participating in Facebook groups in their spare time, it is assumable that this research attracted more teachers feeling engaged in their job than burned out. Therefore, it is harder to draw large conclusions from the analysis of this sample.

We can speak of another limitation when looking at variety in gender. This study contains 91.6% of women. This has limitations on the generalization of the study. The unequal balance of gender is typical for primary education; to be specific, at primary schools 81% is female. However, at secondary schools the division between men and women is equal. According to Lautenbach (2006), women develop *burnout complaints* more easily because women are more sensitive to stress compared to men. Therefore, the majority of women within this sample is a limitation for the external validation of the results.

Lastly, the study design was cross-sectional. This specific design limits the study in finding causal relations, as reversed causality could be a problem. Longitudinal research would need to be conducted to give a better understanding of the causality of the significant predicting relationship of *surface acting* on the dependent variables.

For future research, it would be wise to create two different samples: one sample with participants that are likely to experience more *burnout complaints* -gathered via specific institutions for employees with *burnout complaints*- and one sample with more chance on



engaged participants. gathered via Facebook groups. Furthermore, the associations of *surface acting* and *deep acting* need to be analysed for the different symptoms of *burnout* and *work engagement*. This to gain even more understanding how the wellbeing of teachers can be influenced.

Contributions of the study

With rare exceptions (Prati et al., 2009), the effect of the different aspects of *emotional labour* and *emotional intelligence* on wellbeing have not been simultaneously investigated, especially not among teachers. This gap in science is quite surprising because teachers experience more *burnout complaints* than other occupations; a well-known problem in literature (CBS, 2018); (Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2006). Furthermore, early research noted that there is a lack of research investigating the moderating role of *emotional intelligence* among jobs containing high emotional labour (Prati et al., 2009). Therefore, this research is an important and valuable first step to gain more knowledge in the effects of *emotional labour* and *emotional intelligence* in teachers' wellbeing.

Practical Implications

This study illustrates that *surface acting* has a disadvantage in a profession such as a teaching: a job that requires a high demand of *emotional labour*. The results of this research show that *surface acting* is positively associated with *burnout complaints* and negatively with *work engagement*. This leads to more absenteeism and less organizational commitment among teachers (Hakanen et al., 2006). There already exists a shortage in teachers, so it is important to focus on preventing *burnout complaints* in this specific occupation (Schaufeli & Bergers, 1992).

In addition, if teachers experience *burnout complaints*, they will perform even more fake emotions: *surface acting* (Philip and Heinz 2010). Performing *deep acting* could be the solution. Phillip and Heinz (2010) did a longitudinal research about the predicting role of *deep acting* among teachers. They discovered that *deep acting* reduces *burnout complaints* over time, so if teachers are able to influence their emotions to actually feel the required emotions, this would decrease *burnout complaints*. If we translate this into a solution for teachers in their work environment, it is a priority of employers to provide them with trainings; helping them to perform *deep acting*.



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Appendixes

Questionnaires

Table 1. Dutch Questionnaire on Emotional Labor (D-QEL)

Surface acting

Ik speel toneel tijdens mijn werk
 Ik zet een masker op om voor mijn werk de juiste emoties te tonen
 Ik doe alsof ik die emoties heb die ik voor mijn werk moet tonen
 Ik speel een bepaalde rol om op gepaste wijze met leerlingen om te gaan
 Ik doe alsof ik goede zin heb

Deep acting

Ik werk er hard aan om de emoties te voelen die ik moet laten zien
 Ik doe moeite om de emoties te voelen die ik aan anderen moet tonen
 Ik doe mijn best bepaalde gevoelens op te roepen die ik aan leerlingen moet tonen

Table 2. Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS)

Self-Emotions Appraisal

Ik weet meestal waarom ik bepaalde gevoelens heb.
 Ik heb een goed begrip van mijn eigen emoties.
 Ik versta echt wat ik voel.
 Ik weet altijd of ik blij ben of niet.

Others-Emotions Appraisal

Ik kan de emoties van mijn vrienden steeds afleiden uit hun gedrag.
 Ik merk emoties van anderen gemakkelijk op.
 Ik ben gevoelig voor de gevoelens en emoties van anderen.
 Ik versta de emoties van de mensen rondom mij goed.

Use of Emotion

Ik stel mezelf steeds doelen, en doe mijn best om deze te bereiken.
 Ik vertel mezelf altijd dat ik een competent persoon ben.
 Ik motiveer mezelf.
 Ik moedig mezelf steeds aan om mijn best te doen.

Regulation of Emotion.

Ik ben in staat om mijn humeur te controleren, zodat ik rationeel met moeilijkheden kan omgaan.
 Ik ben bekwaam in het controleren van mijn eigen emoties.
 Wanneer ik boos ben, kalmeer ik altijd snel.
 Ik kan mijn eigen emoties goed onder controle houden.

*Table 2. Maslach Burnout Inventory: de Utrechtse Burnout Schaal voor Leerkrachten (UBOS-L)*

Exhaustion
Ik voel me mentaal uitgeput door mijn werk.
Aan het einde van een werkdag voel ik me leeg.
Ik voel me vermoeid als ik 's morgens opsta en er weer een werkdag voor me ligt.
De hele dag met mensen werken vormt een zware belasting voor mij.
Ik voel me "opgebrand" door mijn werk.
Ik voel me gefrustreerd door mijn baan.
Ik denk dat ik me te veel inzet voor mijn werk.
Ik voel me aan het einde van mijn Latijn.
Depersonalization
Ik heb het gevoel dat ik sommige leerlingen te onpersoonlijk behandel
Ik heb het idee dat ik onverschilliger ben geworden tegenover mensen sinds ik deze baan heb.
Ik maak me zorgen dat mijn werk me emotioneel verhardt.
Het kan me niet echt schelen wat er van mijn leerlingen terecht komt.
Ik heb het gevoel dat leerlingen mij de schuld geven van hun leerproblemen.
Op mijn werk word ik vaak lastig gevallen met persoonlijke zaken waar ik eigenlijk niets mee te maken wil hebben.
Ik probeer me afzijdig te houden van de persoonlijke problemen van mijn leerlingen.
Personal competence
Ik denk dat ik me goed in de belevingswereld van leerlingen kan verplaatsen
Ik weet de problemen van mijn leerlingen adequaat op te lossen
Ik heb het gevoel dat ik door mijn werk het leven van anderen op een positieve manier beïnvloed
Ik kan gemakkelijk een ontspannen sfeer scheppen met mijn leerlingen
Als het lesgeven er op zit kijk ik er tevreden op terug
Ik heb het gevoel dat ik in deze baan veel waardevolle dingen bereik
In mijn werk ga ik heel rustig om met emotionele problemen

*Table 3. Student version Utrecht Work Engagement Survey (UWES-9)*

Vigor
Op mijn werk bruis ik van energie.
Als ik werk voel ik me fit en sterk.
Als ik 's morgens opsta heb ik zin om aan het werk te gaan
Als ik aan het werk ben, dan kan ik heel lang doorgaan
Dedication
Ik vind het werk dat ik doe nuttig en zinvol.
Ik ben enthousiast over mijn baan.
Mijn werk inspireert mij.
Ik ben trots op het werk dat ik doe.
Mijn werk is voor mij een uitdaging.
Absorption
Als ik aan het werk ben, dan vliegt de tijd voorbij
Als ik werk vergeet ik alle andere dingen om me heen.
Wanneer ik heel intensief aan het werk ben, voel ik mij gelukkig
Ik ga helemaal op in mijn werk.
Mijn werk brengt mij in vervoering

Table 4. Informed consent

<p>Hallo</p> <p>U heeft de link geopend naar de vragenlijst, hartelijk dank hiervoor! Deze vragenlijst is onderdeel van het onderzoek om meer inzichten te krijgen in het mentale welbevinden van docenten. Het onderzoek is onderdeel van mijn master Arbeid- en Organisationspsychologie aan de Universiteit van Utrecht. Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt ongeveer 10 minuten. U helpt mij hier enorm mee, bedankt!</p> <p>Participatie</p> <p>Uw deelname aan het onderzoek is uiteraard geheel anoniem en vrijwillig. U kunt tijdens het invullen van de vragenlijst uw deelname altijd stoppen, uw gegevens worden dan niet gebruikt. Daarbij is alle data van het onderzoek vertrouwelijk. Niemand naast mij, de onderzoeker (Carmen Velthuisen) heeft toegang tot de ingevulde vragenlijsten. De data staat beveiligd in de Qualtrics-secure database tot de onderzoeker het verwijdt.</p> <p>Vragen over het onderzoek</p> <p>Voor vragen en/of opmerkingen kunt u altijd bij mij terecht, mijn mailadres is c.a.velthuisen@students.uu.nl</p> <p>Toestemming</p> <p>Als u bovenstaande informatie heeft gelezen en begrepen, kunt u aangeven dat u wel of niet mee wilt doen met dit wetenschappelijke onderzoek en ik uw antwoorden mag gebruiken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Ik stem hiermee in, start de vragenlijst <input type="radio"/> Ik stem hier niet mee in, ik wens niet deel te nemen.
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Table 5. End of the survey

Hartelijk dank voor het deelnemen aan dit onderzoek!

U heeft mij hier erg mee geholpen. Mocht u geïnteresseerd zijn in de resultaten van dit onderzoek, dan kunt u contact met mij opnemen: c.a.velthuisen@students.uu.nl.

Doel en informatie van dit onderzoek

Lesgeven is een beroep met meer werk gerelateerde stress in vergelijking met andere beroepen. Elke dag bent u in contact met leerlingen. Hiervoor moet u bepaalde emoties laten zien, die soms wel of soms niet daadwerkelijk door u gevoeld worden. Het doel van dit onderzoek is om erachter te komen welke invloed het uiten van deze (vereiste) emoties heeft op het welbevinden van docenten.