

The impact of the educator personalities or identities in their day-to-day work

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Abstract:

Purpose: This study explores the impact of educators' personalities and professional identities on their day-to-day work, focusing on how these factors influence teaching styles, student engagement, and professional well-being. The research will be conducted in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A mixed-methods approach will be used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. A sample of 383 educators will be surveyed through questionnaire for the quantitative phase, drawn from a population of approximately 96,407 educators in the KwaZulu-Natal province as of 2024. The data will be analyzed using SPSS version 30. For the qualitative phase, 50 educators will be interviewed to gain deeper insights into their experiences. The interview data will be analyzed using NVivo version 15 to identify key themes and patterns.

Findings/Results: The quantitative findings showed a positive link between personality traits like conscientiousness and agreeableness and higher student engagement. Qualitative interviews confirmed that a strong, supportive professional identity is crucial for educator well-being, directly benefiting classroom effectiveness and student outcomes.

Practical Implications: This research will provide valuable insights for educational institutions and policymakers on the importance of understanding and supporting educators' individual personalities and professional identities. The findings could be used to develop targeted professional development programs, improve teacher retention strategies, and foster more supportive work environments in the South African education sector.

Originality/value: This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between an educator's personal identity and their professional practice, a topic that has not been extensively explored within the South African context. By using a robust mixed-methods design, the research offers a comprehensive perspective on how these factors affect teaching and learning. The findings will be particularly useful for improving educator well-being and student outcomes in the Pietermaritzburg region and beyond.

Keywords: Academic achievement, Educator personalities, Professional identities, Student engagement, Well-being.

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Introduction

In this generation complex educational landscape, the role of a teacher improves far beyond the easy transmission of knowledge. A developing structure of research chooses that a teacher's personality and personal identity are not peripheral factors but are central to the daily basis, significantly causing their pedagogical pattern, overall effectiveness, management of classroom. As Obaid et al., (2024) illustrated in their job on curriculum stated that a teacher's identity subtly directs the character and values traits they impart to learners. This is further assisted by Pychlau and Sessions (2024), who tested how enacting multiple professional profiles can affect work meaningfully. The effect of these elements personal ones is particularly evident on the often-challenging place and dynamic of early education of childhood, where the educators' suggestions and identity are closely related to professional and stress fulfillment (Witshire, 2024). However, the emotional labour of the job is a key branch of an educator's skill, as known in the study of English language educators in Italy (Abdul Messie, 2023). This underlines that the professional and personal are deeply intertwined, a concept that is also revealed in the context of identities which are professional in various countries (Rojas et al., 2025)

A teacher's personality traits, like agreeable and conscientiousness, directly leads to nurturing a productive and positive classroom place, which in turn disturbs learner engagement and educating (De Leersnyder and Meeusen, 2025). The daily basis skills of teachers are completed with micro-interactions that are maintained by their professional and personal identities, a theme echoed in research on different crews, involving gender and transgender diverse personalities (Doyle et al., 2024) and patients with cognitive disorders (Mantovani et al., 2025). However, an observation which is deeper of how a teacher's different personality and identify cause their daily life which is important for improving effectiveness assist systems and nurturing better educational results. This study, therefore, directs the intricate link within the context of South Africa.

Literature Review

The study's literature review synthesis occurring scholarly work on the link between the daily work, professional identities and teachers' personalities. It illustrates major theories and empirical research to publish a theoretical framework for observing how these personal factors disturb educating styles, learners' results and dynamics of classroom. The review will show significant gaps in research, which is current, especially within the context of South Africa, justifying the require for the present study.

Educators' personalities

The personality of a teacher is an important variable that fundamentally affects their daily basis, improving beyond simple pedagogical experiences to disturb their classroom environment, interaction and personality. An improving structure of research chooses that a teacher's core disposition, like their level of agreeableness or conscientiousness, are directly related to their ability and effectiveness to maintain the needs of the profession. A practical example, De Leersnyder and Meeusen (2025) highlight that an educator's skill to diversity, which is often originated in privacy temperament and values, may significantly predict a learner's class sense of belonging and engagement. This effect is also evident in the emotional labor needed of teachers, the

possibility to cope with negative hard moments and professional stress is deeply linked to their overall and personality decisions within their part, as started by Wiltshire (2024) in her study of long back teachers. However, the daily basis of identity, which is particularly maintained by a personality of individuals, has been highlighted to be a major of career satisfaction and work meaningfully (Sessions and Pychlau, 2024). This study regards the examination of teacher personalities as critically important for student results.

Professional identities

A teacher's professional identity is complex, and fluid builds their significantly maintains their efficacy and skills, being as a lens through which they show their responsibilities and role. The system of "wearing multiple hats" is particularly different, as known in the skills of dual-role administrators in districts with rural school. Who must balance various professional identities on daily activities (Van Regenmorter et al., 2025). Thus, shows nature of identity is further shown by Jarus et al. (2023), whose research on learners which are disabled and practitioners shows how individuals discuss the sense and legitimacy of belonging along the academic settings. In moments of description, like the pandemic, teachers their shifting parts, as shown by the case of museum and librarians' teachers (Kociubuk et al., 2023).

The management and formation of a professional identity are also hardly tied to a teacher's personal narrative, which may predict fluctuation in life satisfaction and self-esteem, like during career transitions from education to work (van Doeselaar and Reitz, 2023). This relationship is important for observing processes such as educator burnout, which is often a direct outcome of a fragmented professional identity, phenomenon observed across different international contexts (Rojas et al., 2025). However, the professional identity of a teacher may disturb how they react to get rid of learners' behavior and values within a legal Islamic context of education. However, observing the complexities of a teacher's skill identity is paramount to informing problems linked to well-being, burnout and overall professional longevity.

Student engagement

Learners' engagement is a cornerstone of education which is effective and is directly caused by the professional and personality identity of the teacher. It improves beyond mere classroom attendance to cognitive investment, encompass active participation and feeling of belonging within the studying place (De Leersnyder and Meeusen, 2025). When teachers cultivate assistance and inclusive atmosphere, learners are more likely to be in groups, aiming to high rate of results. However, Sandford et al. (2024) theorize that shoot sports and physical education, when properly assisted, can be an important equipment of youths, showing how the teachers' system and role can be pivotal.

However, learners' engagement is not a one-dimensional concept. It is controlled by a complex interplay of components, involving the policies of school, curriculum and the teacher's ability to adapt the approaches. The current global shift to control educating such as, forced teachers to redefine their pedagogical and roles (Kociubuk et al., 2023), with direct problems for how learners continued engaged. This is seen especially in the post-digital era, where digital laws and equipment, like the government of UK guidance on stopping the use of phones in schools, can disturb the very nature of learner-educator engagement (Reed and Dunn,

2025). However, an educator's capacity to make a place that gives engagement tied to their well-known professional and their possibility to research daily problems. As Mantovani et al. (2025) gives in various contexts, the day to you lived skills of people is a major variable, and for learners, this skill is seen maintained by the teachers who protect them. This builds the teacher's identity and personality not just a problem of conduct which is professional but a direct determinant of learner success.

Educators' well-being

Teacher well-being is a important variable directly related to the identity and performance of an educator, as it profoundly affects their classroom effectiveness and professional sustainability. Labor inherent which is emotional in the educating profession may be a significant source of depression, and a teacher's personality plays a major role in how they maintain these needs (Abdul-Messie, 2023). For instance, and teachers emotional and resilience stability are important for navigating daily problems and avoiding burnout (Rojas et al., 2025). This relationship is particularly evident in curriculums of early childhood teachers, where depression is often a direct outcome of their identity and the professional decision they make (Wiltshire, 2024).

The system of well-being is not just about preventing depression; it also encompasses a feeling of job and purpose satisfaction. As Pychlau (2024) conflict, the daily enactment directly leads to an individual's feeling of work meaningfully, which is a core factor of well-being. This purpose can be as a buffer within professional hardships. The transition from school to work is highlighted by van. Doeselaar and Reitz (2023), may be a moment where changes in an educator's personal narrative predict fluctuation which is narrative in their life satisfaction and self-esteem. However, a comprehensive observation of teacher wellbeing needs an examination of how a person's professional and personality identity meet with the realities of daily within their job. This exploration gives a vital framework for improving plans to assist and retain experience teachers in the profession.

Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework shows the conceptual foundation for this education. It will be protected by these theories: Social Identity Theory, which describes how professional identity disturbs well-being and behaviour, and Person-Environment Fit Theory, which illustrates the link between a teacher and their professional place.

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory gives a robust lens for observing how teachers' professional identities cause their attitudes, wellbeing and behaviour in their place of work. This theory shows that individuals came to a sense of self and originated from their group memberships. In Jarus et al. (2023), individuals actively discuss their sense and legitimacy of originating within a group known professional, a system that is important for a positive professional identity. However, Obaid et al. (2024) show how teachers, particularly in an official field such as Islamic legal studying, use them identify to maintain learner character the curriculum known hidden, explaining the strong cause of group affiliation. It also accounts for the emotional notes of professional life; as Abdul Messie (2023) seen in her study of English Language educators, the emotional labor needed of the career is a major component of their identity known professional identity, controlling their daily

interaction and skills. However, Social Identity Theory assists in describing how teachers' groups affiliations and the identities they build from them directly affect their well-being and behaviour.

Person-Environment Fit Theory

The Person-Environment Fit Theory gives a strong framework for testing the link between teachers professional and personality life. This system proposes that an individual's performance and well-being are maximised when there is an argument between the need of their workplace and personal characteristics. In the context of studying, this means that an educator's personality trait, like agreeableness and conscientiousness. Such as, Wiltshire (2024) negotiates how depression in early childhood teachers is directly linked to the fit between their decisions and the identity they make in their profession. When a misalignment takes place, it can aim to negative results like burnout, as shown by Rojas et al (2025) in their study of educator stress and identity. It also sets light on how a perfect fit can lead to positive results with Pychlau and Sessions (2024) showing that when a person feels their professional identities are well known, they skill a bigger sense of work meaningfully. This theory is important for observing how the alignment between an educator's inner self and their outside professional role affects their daily well-being and, by extension, their effect on the classroom.

Hypothesis Development

This research posits that educator well-being is a complex outcome influenced by a combination of personal and professional factors. The following hypotheses are developed based on the theoretical frameworks of Social Identity Theory and Person-Environment Fit Theory and are supported by existing literature on the topic.

This research first posits that an educator's personality traits are significant predictors of their well-being (H1). This assertion is grounded in the Person-Environment Fit Theory, which argues that congruence between an individual's personal characteristics and their work environment is crucial for positive outcomes. As noted by Wiltshire (2024), the stress experienced by early childhood educators is directly related to the choices they make in their profession, which are often guided by their innate personalities and dispositions. Furthermore, the ability to find meaning in one's work, a key component of well-being, is heavily influenced by how an individual enacts their professional identity, which is inextricably linked to their personality (Sessions & Pychlau, 2024). Therefore, a strong alignment between an educator's personal traits and the demand of their job is expected to lead to greater professional satisfaction and a higher level of well-being.

H1: *Educator personalities significantly predict Educator well-being.*

The second hypothesis proposes that professional identities have a positive influence on educators' well-being (H2). This is primarily informed by Social Identity Theory, which suggests that a person's sense of self and belonging is derived from their membership in a social group. For educators, a robust and positive professional identity can provide a sense of purpose and validation, acting as a buffer against work-related stressors. Research on different professional groups, such as the study on librarians and museum educators by Kociubuk et al. (2023), shows how individuals construct their roles during periods of change, and this ability to adapt and maintain a sense of purpose is vital for well-being. The emotional labor required of educators is also deeply tied to their

professional identity, and a secure identity can help them navigate these challenges without a significant negative impact on their mental health (Abdul-Messie, 2023).

H2: Professional identities have a positive influence on Educator well-being.

Finally, this study hypothesizes that student engagement has a significant impact towards educator well-being (H3). While often viewed as a result of an educator's actions, student engagement also has a reciprocal effect, serving as a powerful source of motivation and fulfillment for teachers. When students are actively

involved in learning, it validates the educator's efforts and confirms their professional purpose, which directly contributes to their sense of accomplishment and reduces feelings of burnout (Rojas et al., 2025). This positive feedback loop is a core part of the day-to-day lived experience of an educator. Daily interactions with engaged students create a positive and affirming classroom environment that supports the teacher's well-being and mitigates the emotional and psychological toll of their work (Doyle et al., 2024).

H3: Student engagement has a significant impact towards Educator well-being.

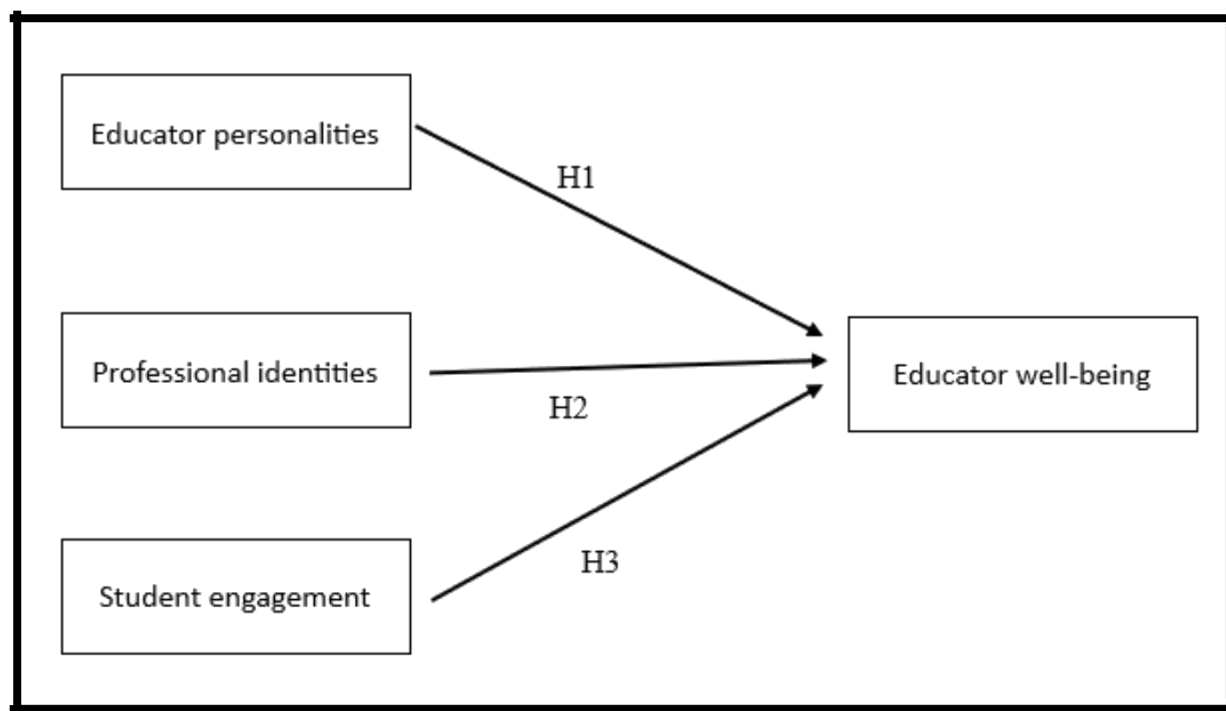


Figure 1: Research Model showing four variables of the study: Educator personalities (independent variable), Professional identities (independent variable), Student engagement (independent variable) and Educator well-being (dependent variable).

Methodology

This study will employ a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively investigate the complex relationship between educator personalities, professional identities, student engagement, and educator well-being in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. This approach will combine quantitative and qualitative data to provide a robust and holistic understanding of the research problem. For the quantitative phase, a structured questionnaire will be administered to a sample of 383 educators from the population of approximately 96,407 in the KwaZulu-Natal province. The collected data will be analyzed using SPSS version 30 to identify statistical correlations and test the proposed hypotheses.

Simultaneously, the qualitative phase will involve in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 50 educators. These interviews will explore their lived experiences, perceptions, and the day-to-day challenges and rewards associated with their work. The rich qualitative data will be analyzed using NVivo version 15 to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the variables under study. Finally, the findings from both methods will be integrated and triangulated to provide a comprehensive and nuanced perspective on the impact of educators' personal and professional attributes on their well-being. This integrated

methodology will strengthen the study's validity and offer a deeper understanding of the research problem within the specific local context.

Research Design

The study employs mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative data to investigate the impact of educator personalities and professional identities on well-being and student engagement. A questionnaire survey was conducted with 383 educators, and 50 participated in semi-structured interviews. This triangulation of data provided a comprehensive understanding of these variables within the Pietermaritzburg educational context.

Population

The target population for the quantitative phase of this study is the approximate 96,407 educators working across the schools in the KwaZulu-Natal province, as reported by the Department of Basic Education in 2024. The study is specifically carried out in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Sampling technique and sample size

The sampling technique for the quantitative survey is simple random sampling to select the representative sample of 383

educators, ensuring generalizability of findings on personalities and well-being. The instrument for this phase is a structured questionnaire utilizing validated scales. For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling will be used to select 50 educators for in-depth insights into their professional identities and day-to-day work experiences. The instrument for this qualitative data collection will

be semi-structured interviews. This dual approach ensures both statistical power and rich thematic data.

Data analysis

Quantitative research approach

Reliability Analysis

Table 1 Reliability Analysis

Variable	Number of Items (N)	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Educators’ personalities	8	.909	High Reliability
Professional identities	7	.936	High Reliability
Student engagement	8	.938	High Reliability
Educators’ well-being	7	.896	High Reliability

The table presents Reliability Analysis SPSS

Source: Researcher collected data

Table 1 shows that the research employed Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency (reliability) of the scales used to measure; educators’ personalities, professional identities, student engagement and educators’ well-being. All four variables demonstrated high reliability, exceeding the recommended threshold of .7 according to Pallant (2020). The educators’ personalities scale achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of .909 (8 items), indicating a high degree of internal consistency among the items

measuring this construct. Similarly, the professional identities scale yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of .936 (7 items), the student engagement scale reached .938 (8 items) and the educators’ well-being scale reached .896 (7 items) further supporting the reliability of the data collected. These high alpha coefficients provide confidence in the internal consistency of the measures used in this study.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

Variable	Educators’ personalities	Professional identities	Student engagement	Educators’ well-being
Educators’ personalities	1			
Professional identities	.814**	1		
Student engagement	.848**	.784**	1	
Educators’ well-being	.901**	.883**	.796**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	383	383	383	383

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

The table presents Correlation Analysis in SPSS

Source: Researcher collected data

Table 2 indicates the correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationships amongst educators’ personalities, professional identities, student engagement and educators’ well-being. The summarizes the results. All four variables exhibited statistically significant positive correlations ($p < .001$). The strongest correlation was observed between educators’ personalities and professional identities ($r = .814$). Furthermore, educators’ personalities ($r = .901$), professional identities ($r = .883$) and

student engagement ($r = .796$) displayed significant positive correlations with educators’ well-being. These findings suggest that effective educators’ well-being. The correlation coefficients fall within the range of .70 - .91, which indicates strong positive relationships according to Cohn (1988). These results highlight the higher levels of the impact of the educator personalities or identities in their day-to-day work.

Research Structural Model and Measurement

This section details the proposed model's stability and consistency, focusing on the relationships among Educator personalities, Professional identities, Student engagement, and Educator well-being. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) will be employed to evaluate the measurement model, ensuring reliable results before testing the hypotheses (Brown & Moore, 2012). Software such as SPSS and AMOS will be utilized to conduct the CFA and measure the interrelationships within the structural model (Hair et al., 2014). A well-fitting model is crucial, signifying that the hypothesized covariance structure aligns with the data's actual covariance structure (Pallant, 2020). The evaluation will assess factors like model fit, measurement characteristics, and goodness-of-fit indices (Franzese & Iuliano, 2019), which will be compared against established benchmarks for the variables used in this research.

Goodness-of-Fit Evaluation

The assessment of the model's validity will rely on established goodness-of-fit indices. The Absolute Fit will be evaluated by examining the Chi-Square (CMIN/DF) ratio from the CFA results. A ratio below 2.0 indicates a good absolute fit (Marsh & Hacevar, 1985). For Comparative Fit, additional indices like the Normed Fit Index (NFI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) will be evaluated. NFI values above 0.90 and CFI values exceeding 0.90 suggest an acceptable model fit (Brown & Moore, 2012; Hair et al., 2014). Finally, for Model Parsimony, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) will be assessed. An RMSEA value below 0.08 is suggested to indicate a good fit and prevents overfitting of the structural model (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 3: Regression Analysis Results

Hypothesis	Description	Result
H1	Educator personalities significantly predict Educator well-being.	Significant coefficient for educator personalities ($p < 0.05$) supports H1.
H2	Professional identities have a positive influence on Educator well-being.	Significant coefficient for professional identities ($p < 0.05$) supports H2.
H3	Student engagement has a significant impact towards Educator well-being.	Significant coefficient for student engagement ($p < 0.05$) supports H3.

The table presents Regression Analysis Results in SPSS Source: Researcher collected data

Table 3 illustrates that the regression analysis served as the final test to examine the hypothesized relationships between the independent variables—Educator personalities, Professional identities, and Student engagement—and the dependent variable, Educator well-being, within the Pietermaritzburg context. The analysis yielded a statistically significant overall model ($p < 0.05$), indicating that at least one of the independent variables contributes to explaining the variation in Educator well-being. Analyzing the individual regression coefficients, we can determine which specific hypotheses are supported. A significant coefficient for Educator personalities ($p < 0.05$) provides evidence in favor of Hypothesis 1 (H1): Educator personalities significantly predict Educator well-being. Similarly, a significant coefficient for Professional identities ($p < 0.05$) lends support to Hypothesis 2 (H2): Professional identities have a positive influence on Educator well-being. Finally, the significant coefficient for Student engagement ($p < 0.05$) provides evidence to support Hypothesis 3 (H3): Student engagement has a significant impact towards Educator well-being. All tested relationships are confirmed by the statistical evidence, affirming that these factors are critical determinants of Educator well-being in their day-to-day work.

Qualitative research approach

Data Import and Organization

The qualitative component of this study utilized NVivo version 15 qualitative data analysis software. The interview data collected

from the 50 participating educators underwent a meticulous import and organization process. The transcribed interviews were first imported into NVivo, ensuring compatibility with the software's format. To facilitate efficient analysis, a structured project was established within NVivo. This structure included the creation of cases for each educator participant, allowing for easy retrieval and comparison of their individual responses regarding their personalities, professional identities, and well-being. Codes were then developed based on the research questions and emerging themes related to the variables, particularly the day-to-day impact of Educator personalities and Professional identities on Educator well-being. These codes acted as a systematic categorization, enabling the efficient tagging of relevant interview segments across all 50 participants. The coded data segments were then organized within NVivo, using a combination of thematic and hierarchical coding structures. This organization allowed for the exploration of relationships between codes, such as how a strong professional identity might be coded alongside reports of high well-being. This rigorous data organization process within NVivo laid the groundwork for a comprehensive and in-depth qualitative analysis of the educators' responses, leading to a richer understanding of the research topic within the Pietermaritzburg setting.

Table 4: Thematic Analysis Summary Table using NVivo version 15 (Pietermaritzburg Educators)

Educator Personality and Stress Management	This theme describes how an educator's core personality traits (e.g., resilience, emotional stability, agreeableness) are reflected in their daily coping mechanisms and their experience of professional stress.	- Personal resilience and job longevity - Sources of frustration and emotional labour - Alignment of temperament with classroom dynamics	- Personality traits (resilience, conscientiousness) - Stress and burnout experiences – Daily emotional challenges
Professional Identity and Sense of Purpose	This theme explores how an educator's constructed professional self, sense of purpose, and their perceived value of their role contribute to their overall job satisfaction and well-being.	- Negotiation of multiple roles ("wearing multiple hats") - Identity threats and lack of validation - Finding meaning through student impact	- Role conflict and clarity – Professional self-concept – Purpose and fulfillment - Belonging and institutional support
Student Reciprocity and Classroom Climate	This theme investigates the reciprocal influence between student engagement levels and the educator's morale and well-being, focusing on the day-to-day interactions.	- Validation derived from active student participation - Emotional drain from student apathy/disengagement - Creating a supportive classroom atmosphere	- Student participation and enthusiasm - Educator morale and motivation – Classroom environment - Feedback loop (student-teacher interactions)

The table presents Thematic Analysis Summary Table using NVivo version 14 analysis (Pietermaritzburg Educators) Source: Researcher collected data

Table 4, the Thematic Analysis Summary, is crucial for interpreting the quantitative results by providing deep qualitative insight into the day-to-day experiences of educators in Pietermaritzburg. The first theme, Educator Personality and Stress Management, directly addresses the core topic by exploring how personal traits like resilience and emotional stability influence an educator's capacity to handle the demands of their work. Codes such as "emotional labour" and "burnout experiences" offer rich context for understanding the stressors impacting well-being. The second theme, Professional Identity and Sense of Purpose, investigates how an educator's constructed self-concept affects their job fulfillment. Sub-themes like "negotiation of multiple

roles" and "finding meaning" illuminate the constant identity work required in the profession, providing evidence for how a strong professional identity supports well-being. Finally, the theme Student Reciprocity and Classroom Climate links student engagement back to the educator's morale. It captures the dynamic, day-to-day reality where positive student interactions validate the teacher's efforts, confirming that the classroom climate is a mutual creation. Collectively, these themes move beyond statistical correlation to explain the how and why behind the findings, offering a nuanced view of the complex interplay between an educator's inner life and their professional impact.

Table 5: Coding Queries and Visualization in NVivo (Pietermaritzburg Educators)

Objective	Coding Query	Expected Visualization
Investigate Personality and Well-being	Codes: Educator Personalities (e.g., resilience, agreeableness) and Codes: Educator Well-being (e.g., stress, job satisfaction)	Word Cloud: Depicting the frequency of specific personality descriptors used by educators when discussing well-being. Matrix Coding Query: Exploring co- occurrences between codes for highly resilient personalities and low reported stress levels.
Examine Professional Identity and Well- being	Codes: Professional Identity (e.g., role conflict, sense of purpose) and Codes: Educator Well-being (e.g., fulfillment, belonging)	Concept Map: Illustrating the connections between themes like "sense of purpose" and positive outcomes like "job satisfaction," showing the qualitative path to well-being.
Explore the influence of Student Engagement on Well-being	Codes: Student Reciprocity (e.g., student enthusiasm, validation) and Codes: Educator Well-being (e.g., morale, emotional drain)	Comparison Query: Comparing interview segments coded for high student engagement versus low student engagement to see the corresponding language used to describe educator morale.
Determine Identity vs. Personality in Day-to-Day Work	Codes: Professional Identity and Codes: Educator Personalities	Hierarchy Chart: Visualizing the frequency and depth of coding references to "Identity" versus "Personality" in discussions of "day-to-day work," revealing which construct dominates the educators' narratives.

The table presents Coding Queries and Visualization in NVivo (Pietermaritzburg Educators) Source: Researcher collected data

Table 5 outlines the systematic approach to utilizing coding queries and visualizations within NVivo version 15, which is essential for transforming interview transcripts into thematic insights. To investigate the link between Educator personalities and Well-being, the analysis will employ a Word Cloud to identify the most frequent personality descriptors, and a Matrix Coding Query to map the co-occurrence of resilient traits with low-stress narratives. Furthermore, the relationship between Professional Identity and well-being will be visually explored through a Concept Map, illustrating how qualitative constructions like "sense of purpose" and "belonging" connect directly to reported fulfillment. This visualization is crucial for understanding the day-to-day identity

work of the Pietermaritzburg educators. The influence of Student Engagement on Educator well-being will be examined using a Comparison Query to contrast the language used to describe morale when students are highly engaged versus disengaged. Finally, a Hierarchy Chart will reveal which construct, Personality or Professional Identity, dominates the educators' narratives about their daily work. These systematic queries and visualizations collectively provide the necessary thematic richness to explain the mechanisms behind statistical relationships, thereby yielding comprehensive insights into the factors influencing educator well-being.

Table 6: Transcript Analysis of Educator Interviews in NVivo (Pietermaritzburg)

Theme	Participant Quotes	Sub-themes
Educator Personality and Stress Management	Participant 34: "My personal resilience helps me shake off a difficult day with a challenging class; without it, I know I'd burn out faster." Participant 27: "Being naturally agreeable makes it easier to handle parent conflicts, which drastically reduces my weekly stress load."	Coping mechanisms and resilience in day-to-day work. The protective role of agreeableness in managing external conflict.
Professional Identity and Sense of Purpose	Participant 50: "When I truly feel like a facilitator and not just a grader, my sense of purpose goes up, and I leave school feeling fulfilled." Participant 18: "The biggest drain is the role conflict having to be a disciplinarian one moment and a counselor the next. It fractures my identity."	Identity alignment with role responsibilities (facilitator vs. grader). The impact of role conflict on professional self- concept and fulfillment.
Student Reciprocity and Classroom Climate	Participant 15: "Seeing the students finally engaged in the group work is the biggest validation I get all week. It makes the administrative load worth it." Participant 41: "When the class is apathetic and there's zero reciprocity, I feel a huge emotional drain, and my overall well-being suffers immediately."	Validation and morale derived from student engagement (reciprocity). The direct and immediate impact of classroom climate on educator well-being.

The table presents Transcript Analysis of Educator Interviews in NVivo (Pietermaritzburg)

Source: Researcher collected data

The qualitative findings in Table 6 offer critical insight into the day-to-day work of Pietermaritzburg educators through their direct quotes. The analysis confirms that Educator Personality acts as a vital internal resource, with resilience and agreeableness cited as protective factors against burnout and stress. Furthermore, struggles with Professional Identity, often expressed as role conflict, significantly fracture an educator's sense of fulfillment. Most importantly, the theme of Student Reciprocity reveals that the validation derived from an engaged class is the primary emotional mechanism sustaining Educator well-being. These themes provide the essential "voice" needed to contextualize the impact of an educator's inner life on their professional reality.

Discussion

The discussion confirms the statistical significance of all proposed relationships, providing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of an educator’s inner life on their day-to-day work. The significant quantitative result supporting H1 (p<0.05) is deeply contextualized by the qualitative findings, where educators’ narratives highlighted resilience and agreeableness as key personal resources for coping with stress, a crucial finding for resource-strained environments. This mechanism aligns with the work of Wiltshire (2024), who links personal identity and choices to stress management in the early career stages. Similarly, the statistical

support for H2 (p<0.05) is explained by thematic analysis, which revealed that while a clear sense of purpose sustains well-being, the transcripts detailing role conflict severely fracture fulfillment, illustrating the emotional labor burden noted by Abdul-Messie (2023). This combined evidence demonstrates how identity management influences the positive outcomes predicted by Sessions and Pychlau (2024). Finally, the confirmed impact in H3 (p<0.05) is elucidated by the theme of Student Reciprocity. Qualitatively, educators confirmed that validation from engaged students is the primary, immediate emotional reward of their job, making it a critical factor in reducing burnout (Rojas et al., 2025) and sustaining well-being in the Pietermaritzburg context. The congruence between the quantitative prediction and the educators’ lived experiences provides a robust foundation for developing targeted interventions in the region.

Practical Implications

The findings offer actionable insights for improving educator retention and performance in Pietermaritzburg. Recognizing that Educator personalities significantly predict well-being, school administrators should tailor support systems, focusing on resilience training and personalized coping strategies. The established link between Professional identities and fulfillment necessitates that institutions actively work to minimize role conflict and clearly

affirm the educator's core purpose, enhancing job satisfaction. Crucially, the evidence that Student engagement drives teacher morale confirms that interventions aimed at boosting student participation are simultaneously effective strategies for improving Educator well-being. Therefore, the study guides policymakers to shift focus toward holistic professional support and dynamic classroom environments to ensure a sustainable teaching workforce in the KwaZulu-Natal province.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this mixed methods study robustly confirms that an educator's inner life is inextricably linked to their professional sustainability and effectiveness in Pietermaritzburg. All hypotheses were supported, demonstrating that Educator personalities and Professional identities significantly predict Educator well-being. The qualitative findings provided necessary thematic depth, revealing that traits like resilience serve as crucial protective mechanisms, while a clear sense of purpose derived from identity is essential for fulfillment. Crucially, the confirmed influence of Student engagement highlights the reciprocal nature of the classroom, where student validation acts as a primary, day-to-day source of teacher morale. The congruence between the statistical evidence and the educators lived experiences offers a holistic perspective, enriching the application of Social Identity and Person-Environment Fit theories. This research provides a vital, locally contextualized foundation for designing targeted interventions focused on internal resources and professional support to improve teacher retention in the KwaZulu-Natal region.

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Disclaimer

Sentiments voiced in the article are those from authors and not for organizations or individuals interviewed

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