

Teachers' Work Demands, Professional Engagement and Personal Wellbeing

Chair: Helen M. G. Watt (*The University of Sydney*)

Discussant: Jo-Anne Reid (*Emeritus Professor, Charles Sturt University*)

1. Helen M.G. Watt (*USyd*), Paul W. Richardson (*Monash*) & Mikaël De Clercq (*Leuven*)
Profiles of teachers' striving and wellbeing from early until mid-career: Workplace influences and consequences for engagement and wellbeing
2. Theresa Dicke, Herb Marsh, Philip Parker, Phil Riley, Jiesi Guo & Geetanjali Basarkod(*ACU*)
Principal health and wellbeing: An overview of a ten-year research program
3. Rebecca J. Collie (*UNSW*)
Job demands and resources, teacher wellbeing, and turnover intentions: An examination during COVID-19
4. Susan Beltman (*Curtin*), Tina Hascher (*Bonn*) & Caroline Mansfield (*Notre Dame*)
In the midst of a pandemic: Australian teachers talk about their wellbeing

Teachers' Work Demands, Professional Engagement and Personal Wellbeing

- **Timely insights into effects of the professional challenges faced by educators, and what can help support their thriving:**
 - for professional engagement,
 - and personal wellbeing.
- **Complementary insights from researchers working several years on these issues:**
 - how workplace demands and supports impact the evolution of teachers' striving and wellbeing, retention and professional engagement from their early until mid-career (Paper 1);
 - impacts on principals' wellbeing and consequences for teachers and students (Paper 2); and
 - impacts of the specific COVID-19 global health pandemic on teachers' wellbeing and turnover intent (Papers 3—4),
 - employing complementary theoretical perspectives and methodologies.
- **Findings highlight the destructive influence of a culture of excessive work demands, and the importance of relational and leadership support to sustain healthy and effective teachers and principals in their work.**
- **Our Discussant will elaborate implications for theory, future studies, teacher professional development, teacher education and educational policy.**



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In AARE Feature Symposium:
'Teachers' Work Demands, Professional
Engagement and Personal Wellbeing'

Profiles of Teachers' Striving and Wellbeing from Early until Mid-Career:

Workplace influences and consequences for engagement & wellbeing

Helen M. G. Watt (*USyd*), Paul W. Richardson (*Monash*) & Mikaël De Clercq (*Leuven*)



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Key Questions

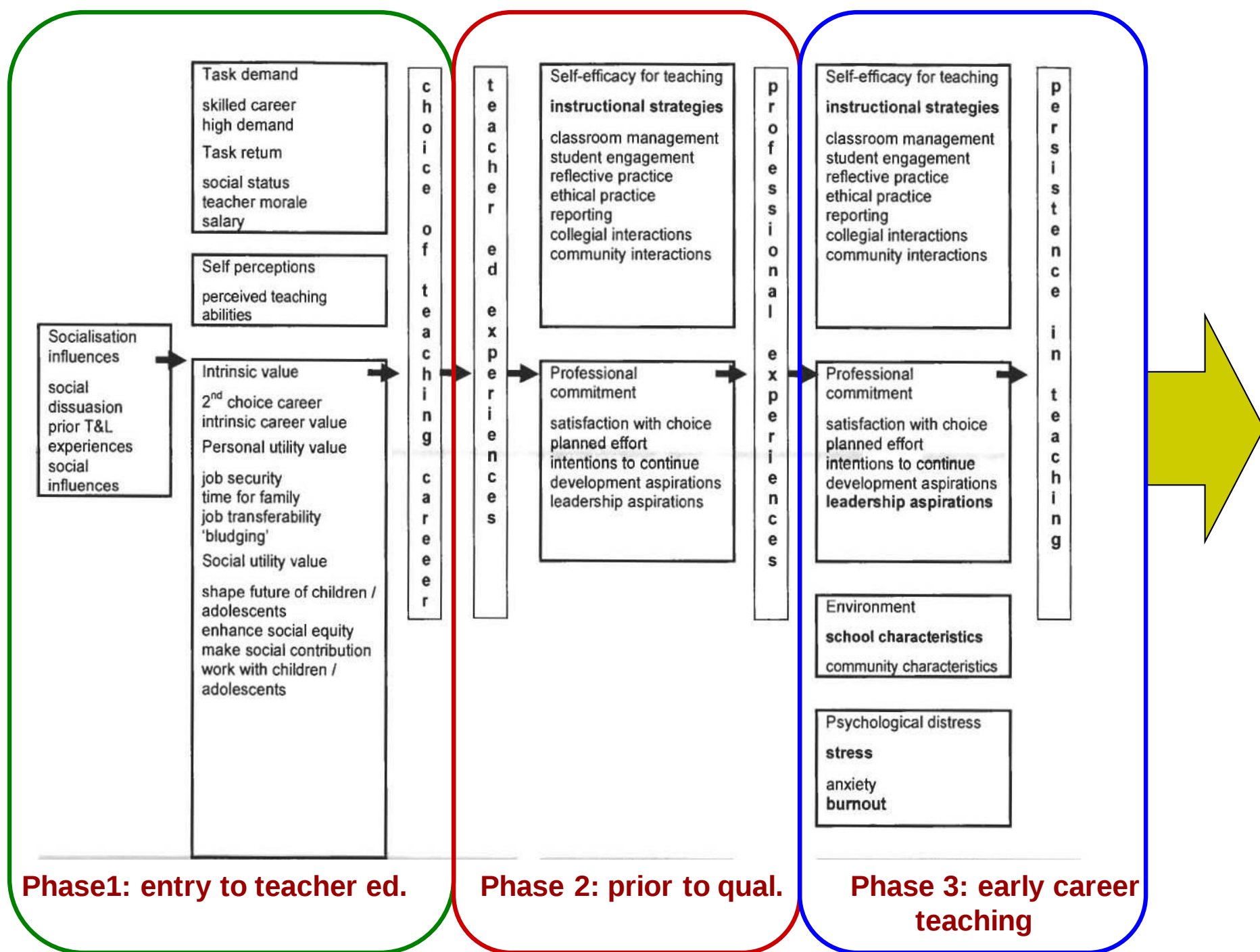
In a first large-scale longitudinal study of beginning teachers in Australia, our *FIT-Choice* project continues to track the experiences of initially 2,007 future teachers:

- from the time they entered into teacher education in 2002/3/6,
 - into their early career teaching experiences of up to 7 years (of the 842 retained participants, 738 worked as teachers),
 - recently into their mid-career up to 15 years teaching (of the 634 retained participants, 562 were still teaching).
1. Which **expectancies, values and goals** are relevant for future teachers? (How) do they matter?
 2. **What happens to initial motivations** when beginning teachers enter the profession? Why?
 3. How do beginning teachers **cope**?
 4. What are the **risks** for teachers' **effectiveness and wellbeing**?



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How do beginning teachers cope?

Richardson, P. W., Watt, H. M. G., & Devos, C. (2013). Types of professional and emotional coping among beginning teachers. In M. Newberry, A. Gallant, & P. Riley (Eds.), *Emotion and school: Understanding how the hidden curriculum influences relationships, leadership, teaching, and learning* (Advances in Research on Teaching, Vol. 18), pp. 229-253. Emerald.

De Clercq, M., Watt, H. M. G., & Richardson, P. W. (2021). Profiles of teachers' striving and wellbeing: Evolution and relations with context factors and professional engagement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/edu0000702>



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hi wellbeing-
lo commitment

S
Sparing

G
Good health

hi-hi

psychological wellbeing

professional commitment

B
Burnout

A
Ambitious

lo-lo

lo wellbeing-
hi commitment



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W
Worn Out



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Burnout vs. Worn Out

- **Burnout** is linked to teacher turnover, low professional commitment, poor coping strategies, low work satisfaction and wellbeing.
- Teachers who maintain their high motivations in situations where their goals cannot be attained are more likely to burnout (de Jesus & Lens, 2005).
- In contrast, worn out teachers reduce their effort and occupational engagement to cope with chronic stressors, and are no longer personally invested in performing well. Three times as many teachers were worn out than burned out (Stephenson, 1990).
- Teachers worn down by their work exhibit reduced work goals, lower responsibility for work outcomes, lower idealism, heightened emotional detachment, work alienation, and self-interest (Burke & Greenglass, 1995).
- We have empirically identified, with other types, in FIT-Choice data

Design

Step 1. LPA

Profiles
Among 0 to 7 years
of Teaching
(Wave 1)

Step 1. LPA

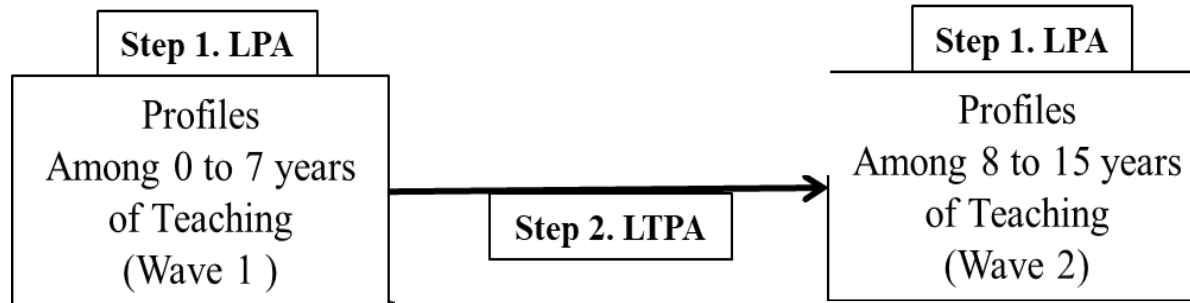
Profiles
Among 8 to 15 years
of Teaching
(Wave 2)



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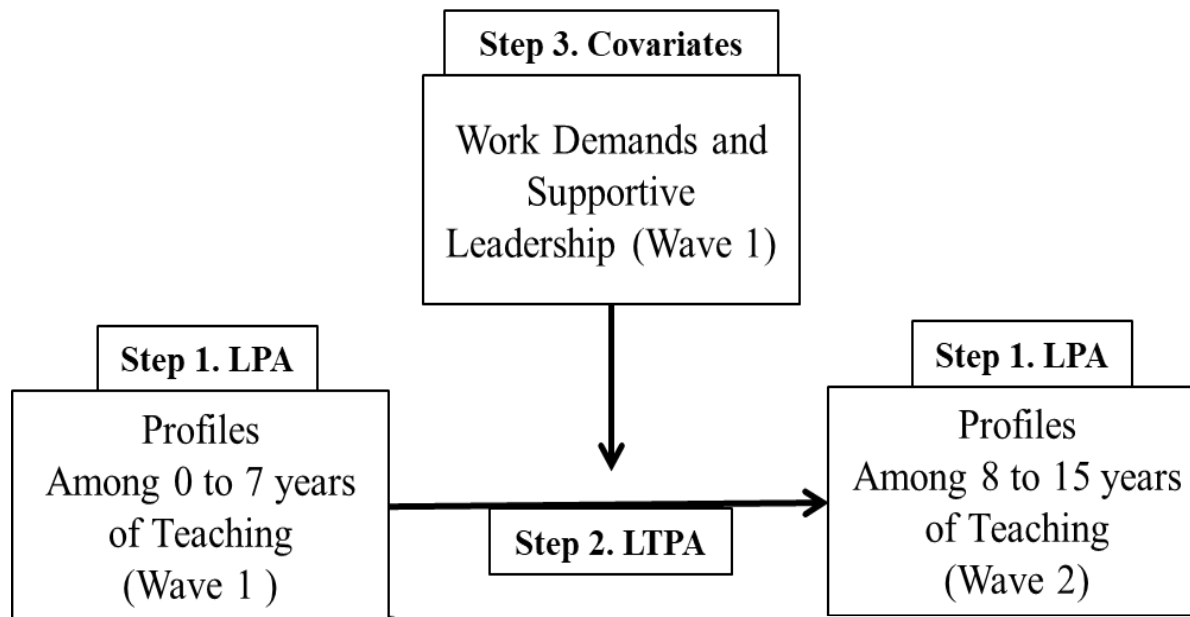
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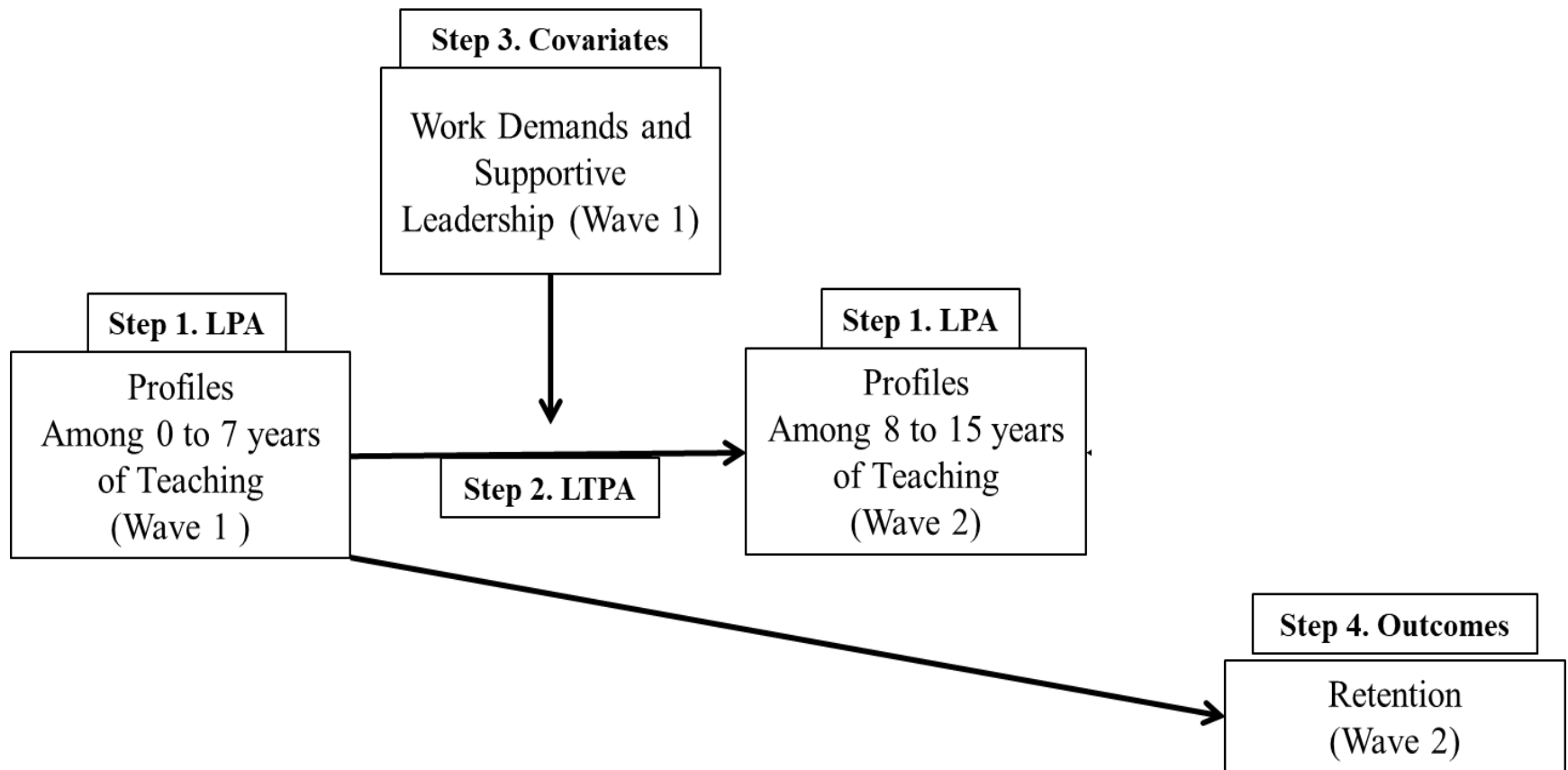
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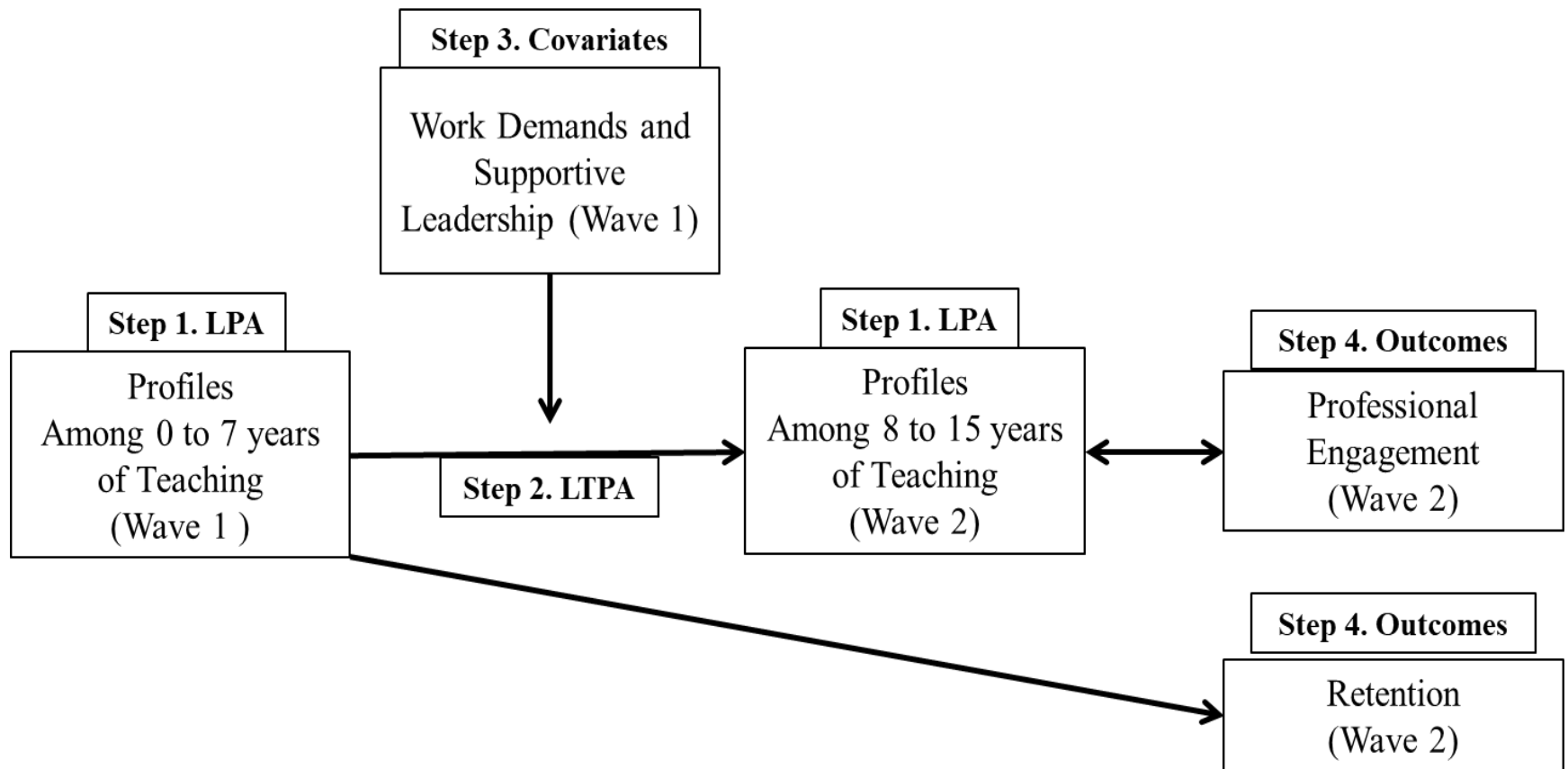
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Measures

Scale	Construct	items	Item example	α W1	α W2
AVEM ^a	Professional ambition	2	To what extent is it true for you that you want to achieve more in your work than anybody else?	.72	.71
	Professional exertion	3	To what extent is it true for you that want to do your work perfectly, even down to the smallest detail?	.68	.67
	Subjective wellbeing & coping	6	To what extent is it true for you that you are able to stay calm and relaxed even if the environment you are in is very hectic or in turmoil?	.77	.74
MBI-ES ^b	Emotional exhaustion	9	I feel emotionally drained from my work.	.90	.91

W1 = wave 1; W2 = wave 2.

Subscales ranged from:

^a 1: not at all true, to 7: totally true.

^b 1: Never; 2: A few times a year or less; 3: Once a month or less; 4: A few times a month; 5: Once a week; 6: A few times a week; 7: Every day.

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SOHQ ^c	Excessive demands	3	There is too much expected of teachers in this school.	.84	
	Supportive leadership	4	The administration in this school can be relied upon when things get tough.	.91	

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^c 1: Strongly disagree, to 5: Strongly agree.

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PECDA ^d	Professional engagement	3	How much effort will you put into your teaching?		.68

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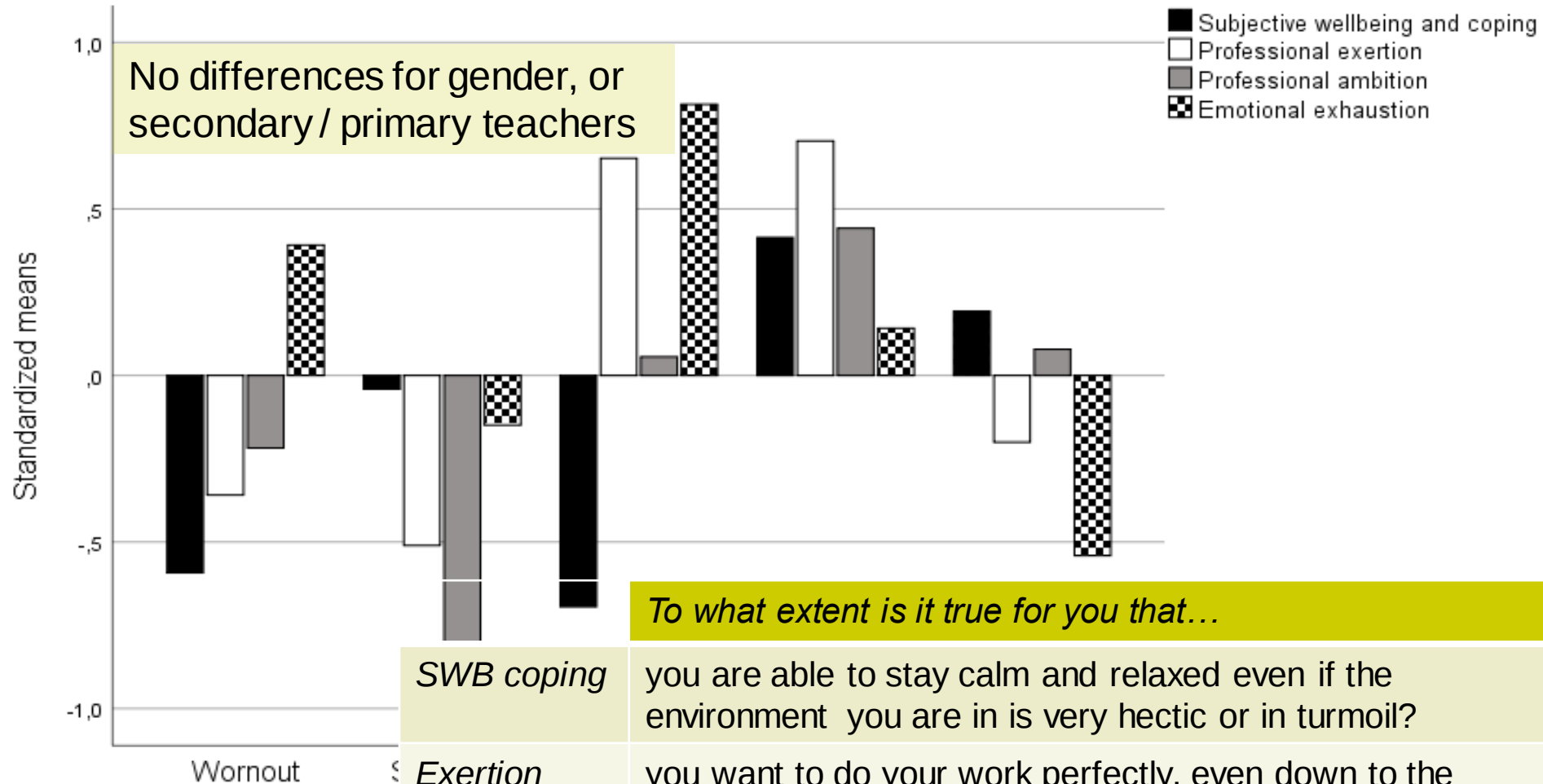
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^c 1: Strongly disagree, to 5: Strongly agree.

^d 1: not at all, to 7: extremely.

Empirical Types: Striving/Wellbeing Profiles



To what extent is it true for you that...

SWB coping

you are able to stay calm and relaxed even if the environment you are in is very hectic or in turmoil?

Exertion

you want to do your work perfectly, even down to the smallest detail?

Ambition

you want to achieve more in your work than anybody else?

Exhaustion

I feel emotionally drained from my work.

Empirical Types: Prevalence

	Sparing <i>n</i> (%)	Wornout <i>n</i> (%)	Burnout <i>n</i> (%)	Ambitious <i>n</i> (%)	Good health <i>n</i> (%)
Early career	60 (16.2%)	74 (20.0%)	51 (13.8%)	114 (30.8%)	71 (19.2%)
Mid career	48 (13.0%)	77 (20.8%)	33 (8.9%)	96 (25.9%)	116 (31.4%)



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Empirical Types: Stability

	Mid-career				
Early career	Wornout	Sparing	Burnout	Ambitious	Good health
Wornout	0.72	<u>0.13</u>	0.09	0.04	0.02
Sparing	<u>0.14</u>	0.57	0.00	0.00	<u>0.29</u>
Burnout	<u>0.20</u>	0.02	0.51	<u>0.22</u>	0.04
Ambitious	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.65	<u>0.32</u>
Good health	0.03	0.02	0.00	<u>0.11</u>	0.84



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Empirical Types: Transitions

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4.1 — 4.4% of S / A / G had quit by mid career, vs.
 - Triple that proportion among Burnout (11.8%)
 - Double among Wornout (8.3%)



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Transitions Affected by Demands/Supports in Early Career

Excessive demands:

- impeded **Sparing** → **Good health** by mid-career
- increased the probability to **remain Wornout/Burnout** instead of recovering to **Sparing/Ambitious** respectively

Leadership support:

- promoted **Burnout** → **Good health** by mid-career



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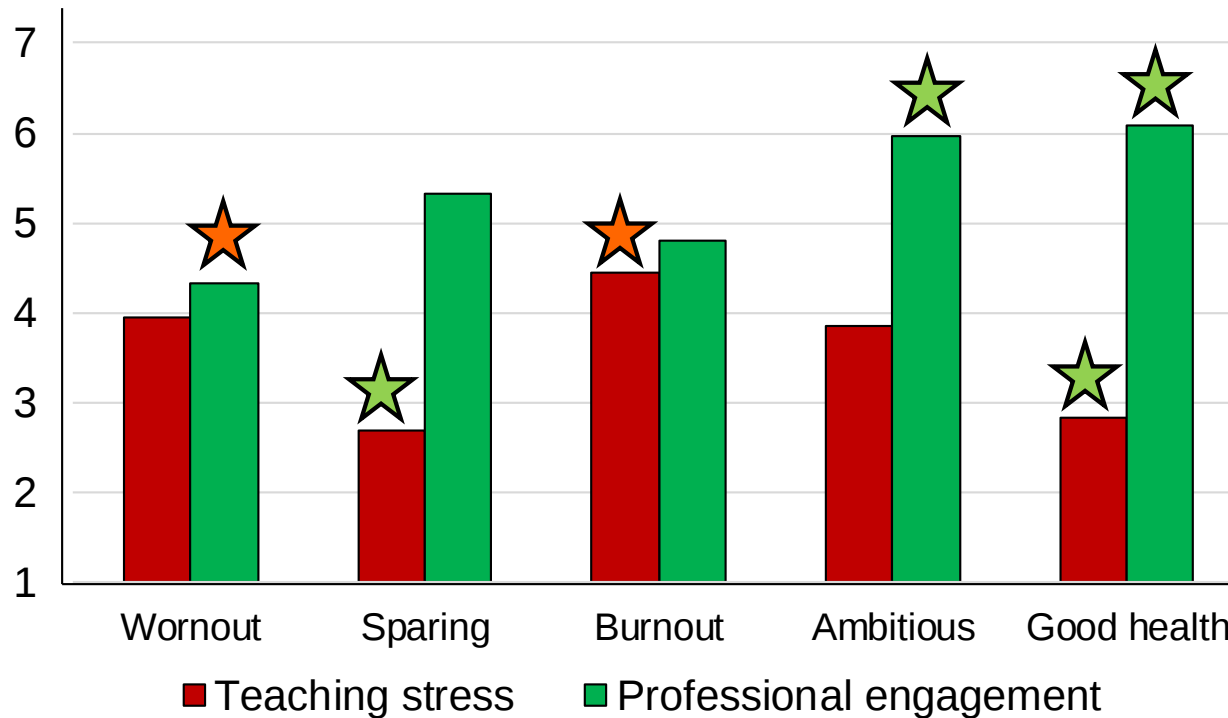
What are the risks for teachers' professional engagement & personal wellbeing?



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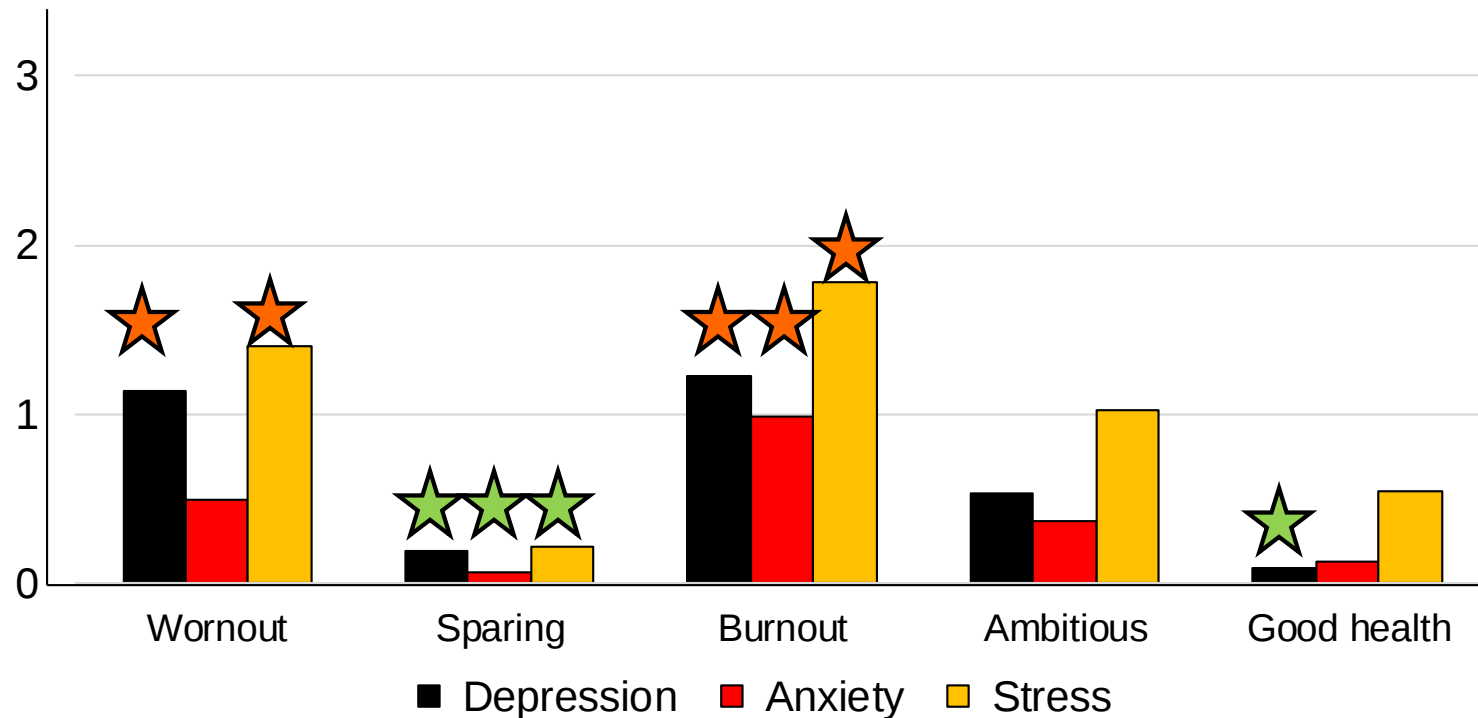
Consequences for Professional Engagement



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Consequences for Personal Wellbeing



How much did each statement apply to you over the past week:

0: Did not apply to me at all

1: Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

2: Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time

3: Applied to me very much, or most of the time

Summary & Implications

- Different striving/wellbeing profiles appear among beginning teachers: Good health (and Sparing) cope best, Burnout / Wornout cope least.
- 'At-risk' profiles can recover with Leadership support during early career; but excessive demands are highly detrimental.

Who (and how) can best intervene, to:

1. assist teachers to **achieve their goals** and positive reasons for entering the profession; and
2. equip them with effective **strategies to cope** when starting teaching?

What is the triple-bottom-line cost, for:

3. teachers' effectiveness and wellbeing; and
4. students' engagement and learning?



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