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The Effect of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization on Perceived Productivity of Primary School' Academic Staff in Kuwait with Positivity as a Moderator

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization and their effect on Perceived Productivity of academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait with the moderating effect of Positivity. To accomplish this aim, some validated and reliable measuring scales were utilized to realize the levels of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Productivity, and Positivity among respondents, and consequently to identify the relationship among variables. 379 participants were selected from English departments in primary schools from all educational zones in Kuwait. Stratified random sampling was adopted for the study. SPSS and SmartPLS were used to analyze data. Results proved that Emotional Exhaustion revealed to significantly affect Perceived Productivity of the English academic staff, while Depersonalization proved to have a low effect on Perceived Productivity of the English academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait. Concerning Positivity, it had a partial moderating effect on the relationship between Emotional Exhaustion and Perceived Productivity, while it didn't play a significant moderating effect on the relationship between Depersonalization and Perceived Productivity. Depending on the study findings, theoretical and practical implications were considered to enhance Perceived Productivity and decrease Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization. Recommendations for future research along with limitations were also underlined.

1 Introduction

Human resources are the most powerful contributor for an organization's competitive position, therefore organizations which aspire to gain a competitive advantage should work hard on their well-being to guarantee a distinctive work productivity [1]. The educational system contains all the administrative components that might develop into burnout, which in turn can affect the academic staff productivity negatively [2]. Emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, as

components of occupational burnout, are psychological conditions which often include feelings of overtiredness, long-term fatigue, despair or hopelessness, frustration, and lack of productivity at work. However, research has proved that positivity increases productivity [3]. Furthermore, positivity is an influential means of mitigating burnout [4], [5], [6].

This study pursues to afford a database about the effect of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and their detrimental consequences on the perceived productivity of the academic staff (teachers and heads of departments) in primary schools in Kuwait. It highlights the effect of positivity, when moderating the relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization on perceived productivity and endeavours to provide a practical study for the Arabic library, and specially the Kuwaiti one which has a shortage of such studies according to the researchers' information, Therefore, this study might have a scientific stature since it deals with a topic that requires more profound investigation in the Arab countries and particularly in the State of Kuwait.

2 Literature Review and Hypotheses

Several models were developed to describe the conditions in which work-related elements lead to burnout; but only some studies presented a unified theory about this concept [7], like Conservation of Resources Theory by [8, 9], and Job-Demand Resource Theory by [11]. As for positivity, Positive Orientation Theory by [12] and Broad-and- Built Theory of Positive Emotions by [13] were the most famous. All of them were verified in theory and practice and mostly employed by prior studies in this domain. According to the COR theory, there are different gain and loss spirals between burnout and related variables [14]. Viewed from that perspective, individuals and organizations granted some effective personal or social resources reservoir (like positivity) should be able to better resist the harmful consequences of burnout and endure daily challenges more effectively [10]. Therefore, this theory can guide interventions to decrease burnout and reinforce future research that examines the relationship between professional burnout and its consequences [7]. While the theory of Positive Orientation concentrates on what self-esteem, life satisfaction and optimism have in common [15]. It assumes that improved positivity can reduce the conceived burnout by facilitating the use of effective coping strategies [15]. Therefore, having positivity on a regular basis reproduces permanent changes in people's personal resources [5]. It's noteworthy to point out that both theories are interrelated, since the COR theory considers positivity a basic personal resource to adapt with stressful conditions, thus, it can assist in decreasing the psychological implications related to the burnout experience [8, 9]. This study will adopt the Conservation of Resources Theory [8], [9], and Positive Orientation Theory [16], [12] as the theoretical framework since both presume that core personal resources (such as positivity) are the individual's mindset concerning all situations in life, and concerning events as expected and happening to their benefit [8], [16], [12].

Several scholars such as [17], [18], and [19] unveiled a need for related studies which examine perceived productivity along with burnout components. While [20] posited that there is a scarcity in research about members of English academic staff who work in governmental schools in Kuwait. It was further assumed by [21] that further research is required to explore how deep the problem is and innovate methods to define it and implement sufficient coping strategies. That's why positivity was chosen as a moderator that can mitigate the effect of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization on perceived productivity, since many scholars like [22], [23], and [24] claimed that it might have a major moderating effect on other variables. Additionally, all the studies done in the educational sector used teachers only as respondents such as [25], [27], [19], [28], [29]. No research has used the whole academic school staff (heads of departments besides teachers) yet as the research society. Therefore, all these foregoing gaps urged the researchers to conduct this study by examining positivity as a moderator in the relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization on perceived productivity of primary school academic staff in Kuwait.

2.1 Emotional Exhaustion (EE)

Emotional exhaustion is the feeling of being depleted of one's emotional and physical resources. It refers to being physically, cognitively, and emotionally drained of energy, as a result of exposure to excessive or threatening job demands, and it is the basic individual stress dimension of burnout [26].

Few studies assumed that emotional exhaustion (EE), as one of burnout components, has no effect on productivity (PP), such as [30] who concluded that there wasn't a significant relationship between emotional exhaustion and job performance among a sample of AICPA members working in public accounting.

While most of the studies demonstrated that emotional exhaustion, can impact perceived productivity negatively. [31] proved that emotional exhaustion can predict health-related loss of productivity significantly. [32] demonstrated that emotional exhaustion was related significantly but negatively with sales performance, and that emotional exhaustion results in lower sales performance. [33] posited that emotional exhaustion has significant effect on employee performance particularly among staff of Tertiary Institutions in Ekiti State in Nigeria. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be derived:

H1 Emotional Exhaustion (EE) significantly affects Perceived Productivity (PP)

2.2 Depersonalization (D)

Depersonalization: is a negative, tough, or excessively detached response towards various aspects of the job, as well as customers or colleagues. It is the lethargic conduct towards others and represents the interpersonal dimension of burnout [26].

Some scholars anticipated that depersonalization (D), as a component of burnout, has no effect on productivity, such as [34] who revealed that depersonalization had an insignificant effect on employees' performance at King Abdul-Aziz university. Furthermore, [35] exposed that there is a weak relationship between depersonalization and performance, and that the feeling of detachment, which is the core of depersonalization, is a matter of individual's internal control, therefore, it may not be seen as a serious matter.

While other scholars posited that depersonalization could impact productivity. [36] proved that depersonalization strongly predicted a decreased quality of respiratory therapists' productivity. [37] concluded that depersonalization had a reverse and meaningful relationship with employee productivity of Shariati and Kharazmi Hospitals in Isfahan. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be derived:

H2 Depersonalization (D) significantly affects Perceived Productivity (PP).

2.3 Positivity (POS)

Positivity represents a deep conformity between self-esteem, optimism, and life satisfaction, which comply with "enduring knowledge structures about oneself and the world that significantly affect one's feelings and actions, shape the present and predispose future experiences" [16]. Research evidence demonstrates that positivity has a negative relationship with burnout components [38]. Therefore, teaching positive thinking can reduce burnout and its components, i.e., emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment [6], while positivity increases productivity as it is not a "naive endeavour" that spoils the resources and time of organizations, but it is rather "an evidence-based pathway" [3].Though no study has observed the relationship between burnout components and perceived productivity taking positivity as a moderator yet; some researchers like [39], [40], [41], [4] attempted to define potential moderators for some of these variables. Furthermore, recommendations to examine positivity as a moderator was offered by many researchers such as [23], [24], [22]. Therefore, this study endeavors to inspect positivity as a moderator regarding its effect on the perceived productivity of the academic staff of the English Department in primary schools in Kuwait.

Some researchers posited that there is no effect of positivity on the relationship between variables, when it intervenes as a moderator, such as [42] who postulated that a type of positivity named "social climate" has no moderating effect on the relationship between positive practices and task performance. [39] demonstrated that there is no difference in the way people encounter interpersonal strain, whether with high or low positivity.

While many others concluded that positivity has a significant effect on the relationship between dependent and independent variables, when it moderates this relationship, such as [40] who proved that positive affectivity can mitigate the harmful effect of burnout on extra-role performance and quitting intentions when it interferes as a moderator. [43] demonstrated that positive thinking can significantly moderate the relationship between employees' engagement and innovative work behaviour. Therefore, the following hypotheses can be derived:

H3 Positivity (POS) moderates the relationship between Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and Perceived Productivity (PP).

H4 Positivity (POS) moderates the relationship between Depersonalization (D) and Perceived Productivity (PP).

3 Overview of the proposed research model

The theoretical framework indicated that the model is composed of two of the determinants of perceived productivity (PP), namely emotional exhaustion (EE), and depersonalization (D), as components of occupational burnout, which were chosen based on previous studies such as [25]. However, this study regards a possibility of adding positivity (POS) as a moderating factor that affects the relationship of EE and D on PP, since the relationship between POS and the other variables was demonstrated separately by earlier studies [38], [3]. Previous discussions about the significance of POS offered the proof that it was able to set up better consequences among members of the academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait. Research evidence has implied similar outcomes [13],[12]. Additionally, many researchers like [44], [4] and [40] recommended performing future studies about POS that can reduce EE and D and enhance PP. Furthermore, more research about POS as a moderator was recommended by several researchers like [24], [23], [22]. Thus, further inquiry on POS will be performed to decide whether it can impact the direction of this relation. A research structural model was developed to determine the targeted research hypotheses. The structural model will examine four hypotheses. Two of them are related to the direst effect of (EE) and (D) on (PP), and the other two are related to the moderating effect of (POS) on the relationships between (EE) and (D) on (PP). Figure 1 demonstrates the hypothesized direct and moderation effects in the research structural model.

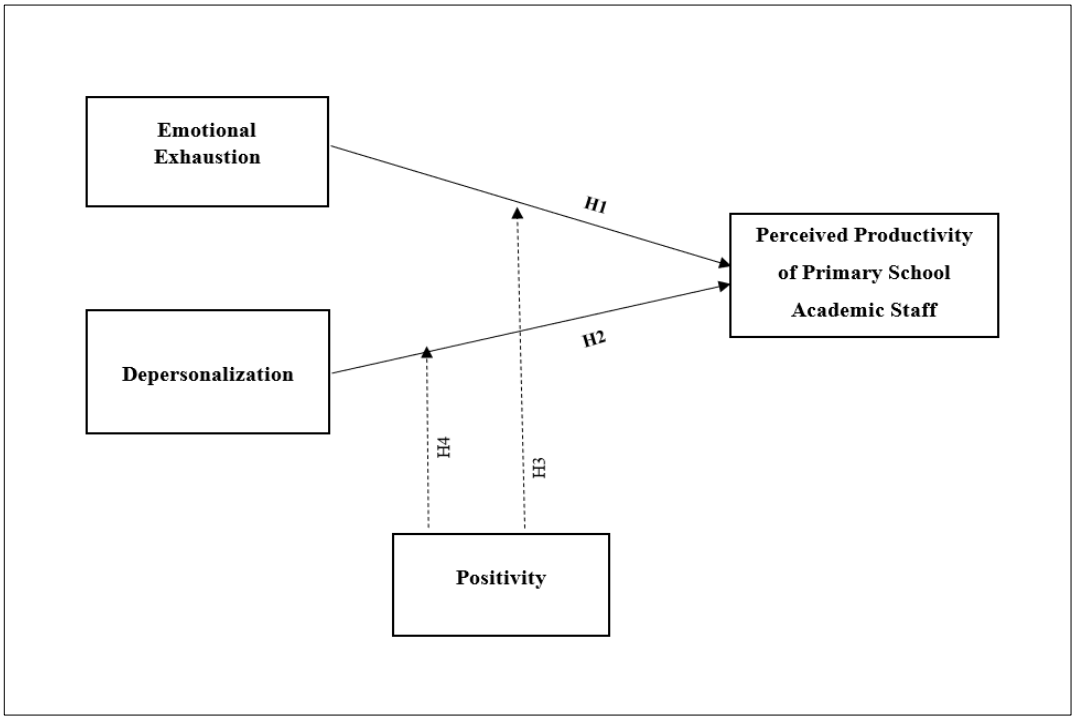

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework of the Current Study, (Source: the authors)

4 Methodology

4.1 Data collection

This study implemented a survey on 379 members of the English academic staff (teachers besides heads of departments) in primary schools in Kuwait, based on the target population 27.027, according to [45], and it adopted stratified random sampling method, since the research society is enormous and not heterogeneous [46]. Communication with respondents was achieved through social media, mobile phones, or electronic mails.

4.2 Research instruments

According to the research nature and main objectives, this study employed an electronic questionnaire (Google form), due to the recommendations of social distancing against Covid 19. A pilot study was implemented on thirty respondents. The reliability and validity of the constructs were tested using Cronbach's alpha and factor analysis approaches, which were applied on the research constructs. SmartPLS and IBM SPSS were utilized to evaluate the data and present the findings of the measurement and structural model analyses. The questionnaire included 31 items, and it depended entirely on scales reliable and validated by prior studies that were applied in the area of this study. The 7-point frequency Likert scale was applied to measure emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, perceived productivity, and positivity.

5 Findings

This study has examined the proposed model in two steps which are the assessment of the measurement (outer) model and the assessment of the structural (inner) model. However, a short demonstration about the respondents' profiles is provided before these two steps.

5.1 Respondents' profile

The first section of the instrument gathered information about respondents' background profile including gender, academic qualification, job nature, years of experience, type of learners, age, and marital status. Table 1 represents this profile.

Table 1: Respondent Profile (Frequencies) (Source: the authors)

Item	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	110	29.03
	Female	269	70.97
Academic Qualification	Bachelor	364	96.04
	Master	12	3.17
	PhD	3	0.79
Job Nature	Head of Department	53	13.98
	Teacher	326	86.02
Years of Experience	1-5	98	25.85
	6-10	106	27.96
	11-20	71	18.74
	21-30	59	15.57
	31-38	45	11.88
Type of Learners	Boys	127	33.50
	Girls	252	66.50
Age	21-30	147	38.79
	31-40	119	31.39
	41-50	74	19.53
	51 and above	39	10.29
Martial	Single	108	28.49
	Married	236	62.27
	Widowed	12	3.17
	Divorced	23	6.07

5.2 Measurement model

This study used SmartPLS 3.3 to assess the research model. It tested the measurement model (i.e., validity and reliability of measures), consequently, Perceived Productivity and Positivity scored low values of AVE (0.465 and 0.466), which were below the cutoff point for AVE (0.5) [47]. Furthermore, EE5, D5, POS6, POS7, PP6 and PP7 scored low factor loadings (0.093, -0.140, 0.037, 0.014, -0.021, and 0.052 respectively) which were all under the level of 0.4 recommended by [48]. Therefore, some modifications were applied in the second run and EE5, D5, POS6, POS7, PP6 and PP7 were omitted to achieve satisfactory levels of AVE and factor loading [48]. Finally, all variables achieved the cutoff point in the second run, as demonstrated in Table 2 (Results are provided also in Figure 2).

Table 2: Convergent Validity Results (Source: the authors)

Variables	Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Depersonalization (D)	D1	0.900	0.934	0.952	0.831
	D2	0.895			
	D3	0.904			
	D4	0.947			
Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	EE1	0.831	0.836	0.891	0.673
	EE2	0.894			
	EE3	0.853			
	EE4	0.690			
Positivity (POS)	POS1	0.814	0.867	0.903	0.650
	POS2	0.820			

	POS3	0.828			
	POS4	0.714			
	POS5	0.850			
Perceived Productivity (PP)	PP1	0.756	0.867	0.904	0.653
	PP2	0.795			
	PP3	0.812			
	PP4	0.863			
	PP5	0.810			

EE5, D5, POS6, POS7, PP6 and PP7 were deleted due to low factor loading, Cronbach's Alpha, and AVE, as follows:

- EE5 was deleted due to low factor loading 0.093
- D5 was deleted due to low factor loading -0.140
- POS AVE was 0.465 before deleting both of POS6 (factor loading 0.037) and POS7 (factor loading 0.014)
- PP AVE was 0.466 before deleting both of PP6 (factor loading -0.021) and PP7 (factor loading 0.052)

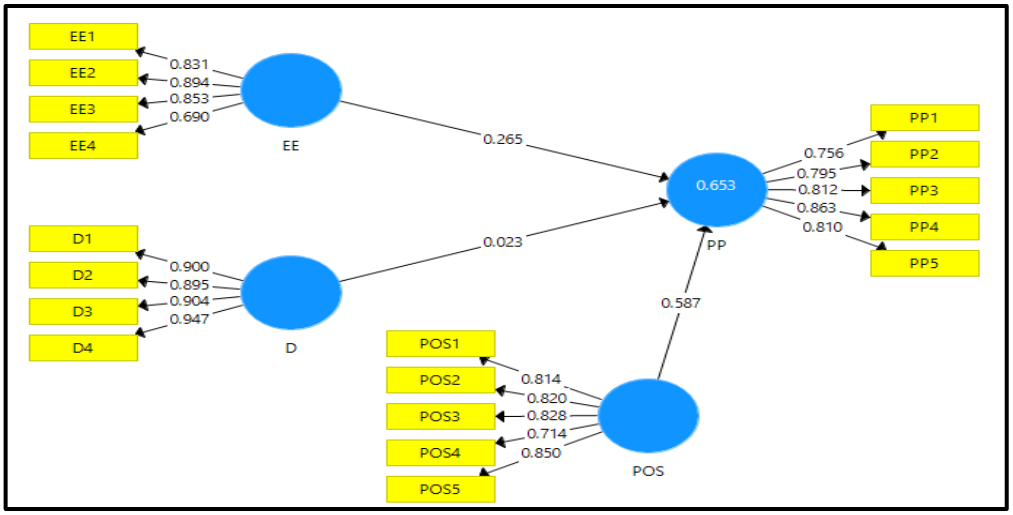

Figure 2: PLS algorithms results (Source: the authors)

Then, the discriminant validity was assessed to estimate whether a construct is different from other constructs. According to [49], the correlation between variables in the model estimation shouldn't be above (0.95) concerning distinguishing validity. Validity was examined depending on the correlation measurement between the constructs and the square root of the average variance developed for a construct [49], [50]. As demonstrated in Table 3, there was a significant discriminant validity among all constructs, and no values were above the recommended cutoff point of 0.95 [50].

Table 3: Discriminant Validity/ Fornell and Larcker Criterion (Source: the authors)

	D	EE	POS	PP
D	0.912			
EE	0.031	0.820		
POS	0.033	0.762	0.807	
PP	0.051	0.713	0.79	0.808

Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) is a calculation that estimates the actual correlation between two constructs, if they were properly assessed (i.e., if they were perfectly reliable) [51], [07]. It is the average of all correlations of indicators across constructs measuring different constructs (i.e., heterotrait-heteromethod correlation) compared to the (geometric) mean of the average correlations of indicators measuring the same construct (i.e., the monotrait-heteromethod correlation), and can be used to assess discriminant validity. The accepted level of HTMT recommended by [51] is below 0.90. As such, this level of HTMT is displayed in Table 4:

Table 4: HTMT Criterion (Source: the authors)

	D	EE	POS	PP
D				
EE	0.069			
POS	0.050	0.889		
PP	0.052	0.819	0.876	

5.3 Structural Model

Structural model constitutes the conceptual aspect of the path model. It is called inner model in PLS-SEM, and it involves the latent variables and their path relationships [47]. As the measurement model was assessed, the structural model will be evaluated, as well. This stage contains six steps in tune with PLS-SEM, as follows: Step "1" is assessment of collinearity. Step "2" is assessment of the path coefficients. Step "3" is coefficient of determination (R^2 value). Step "4" is blindfolding and predictive relevance Q^2. Step "5" is effect size f^2, and Step "6" is assessment of moderating effect [47]. Table 5 demonstrates the PLS bootstrapping results which contain: Beta values, t-values, p-values, hypothesis results (whether supported or not), BCILL, BCIUL, f^2, and VIF scores. Furthermore, Figure 3 sums up the structural model results as well as PLS bootstrapping.

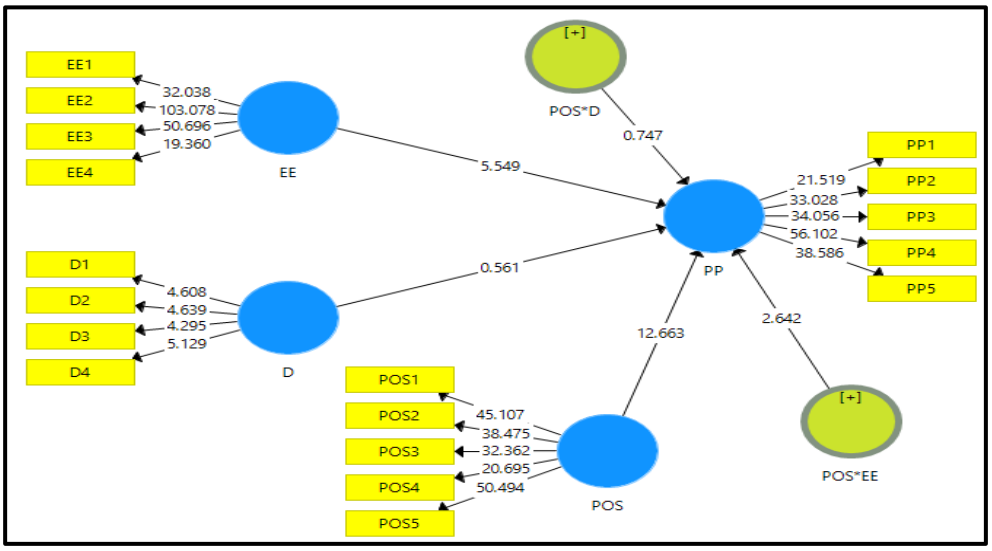

Figure 3: PLS Bootstrapping Results (Source: the authors)

Table 5: Summary of Structural Model/ PLS bootstrapping results (Source: the authors)

H	Hypothesis	Std. Beta	Std. Error	T values	P values	Decision	Confidence Intervals		f^2	Effect size	VIF	R^2	Q^2
							Lower	Upper					
H1	EE -> PP	0.258	0.046	5.549	P<0.001 (0.000)	Supported	0.168	0.321	0.183	Medium	2.392	.663	.416
H2	D -> PP	0.020	0.036	0.561	P>0.05 (0.288)	Rejected	-0.034	0.087	0.001	No effect	1.005		

5.3.1 Assessment of the structural model for collinearity issues

Making sure that multicollinearity doesn't exist can be performed through collinearity assessment, therefore collinearity diagnosis was conducted to estimate and recognize predictors' multicollinearity issues using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) investigation. According to [47], the VIF standard cut-off value is to be equal, or less than 3.3. Multicollinearity test values results are presented in Table 5, which demonstrates that all inner VIF values for the constructs were within the range of 2.392 to 1.005, and there were no VIF values above 3.3.

5.3.2 Assessing the significance of the structural model relationships

As illustrated in Table 5, the bootstrapping approach was conducted in order to offer data for each path relationship in the model to assess the hypotheses. The bootstrapping, in PLS, is a nonparametric test which consists of repeated random sampling along with replacement from the original sample to establish a boot-strap sample and realize standard errors for hypothesis testing [47]. When it comes to the resampling number, [52] recommended bootstrapping with 1000 samples. Four hypotheses are developed for the constructions in this study. T-statistics for all pathways were computed using the bootstrapping tool in SmartPLS 3.3 to evaluate the significance level. In the bootstrapping, a significance level of 0.05, a two-tailed test, and 1000 subsamples were applied. According to [48], the critical value for the significance level of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$) for the two-tailed test is 1.645.

Based on the data in Table 5, the path coefficients had a standardized value between -1 and +1, (Values 0.020 to 0.258). According to [47], estimated route coefficients approaching +1 point out to strong positive associations, and the closer the number comes to zero, the weaker the relationship becomes. Upon performing the T-test in the next step, T-values for the relationships were equal or more than 1.645, thus, they were significant at 0.05 for H1 ($\beta = 0.258$, $t = 5.549$, p-value = 0.000), and H1 was supported. While H2 ($\beta = 0.020$, $t = 0.561$, p-value = 0.288) was rejected. Table 5 summarizes these findings.

5.3.3 The coefficient of determination (R^2)

The following step is to assess the predictive accuracy of the model through the derived value of the coefficient of determination (R^2). According to [47], the value of R^2 ranges from zero to one, and it is associated with the predictive power of the model, with a higher value which implies a higher level of predictive accuracy. Table 5 reveals the value of R^2 calculated using the SmartPLS algorithm.

There are three diverse levels of R^2 scores according to [47] elaborated as follows: If R^2 was higher than (0.75), it is considered substantial. If R^2 was higher than (0.50), it is considered moderate, If R^2 was higher than (0.25), it is considered weak, while if R^2 was below (0.25), it is considered unacceptable. Therefore, the score of R^2 for PP in this study is considered moderate, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Coefficient of determination R^2 (Source: the authors)

Construct	R^2	R^2 Adjusted
PP before	0.663	0.659

Overall, the R^2 values in this study are quite similar to those indicated in most of the existing studies in the corresponding literature. For example, the R^2 value was 0.511 in [53] study which leads to conclude that the model can predict up to 51.1 % of the factors affecting employee performance. This percentage is considered satisfactory in the course of a social science studies.

5.3.4 Assessment of the effect size (f^2)

The next step is to assess the effect size (f^2) which is related to the relative impact of a predictor construct on endogenous constructs. [54] confirmed that both the substantive significance (effect size) and statistical significance (p-value) are crucial to be reported, as well as the p-value. Furthermore, [55] suggested the following levels for f^2 estimate: If f^2 was lower than (0.02), there is no effect at all. If the value of f^2 was (0.02) or more, the effect is considered weak. If the value was higher than (0.15), the effect is considered of a medium effect, and if it was higher than (0.35), it is considered of a substantial effect. Accordingly, Table 5 demonstrates f^2 estimate for exogenous (independent) constructs, as follows: H1 had f^2 values of more than 0.15 which indicates medium size of effect, while H2 had f^2 value less than 0.02 which indicates no effect at all.

5.3.5 Assessment of the predictive relevance (Q^2)

The following step is assessing the predictive relevance of the model through the blindfolding procedure. According to [47], [56], the Q^2 value should be above zero to support the predictive relevance of the model concerning the endogenous (dependent) latent variables. Table 7 demonstrates that Q^2 value of the endogenous construct was above zero, thus, there was no issue associated with a single indicator construct as a predictor construct in this study.

Table 7: Predictive Relevance Q^2 (Source: the authors)

Construct	Q^2
PP	0.416

5.3.6 Assessment of Moderation Analysis

After checking all direct effects, the moderation hypothesis was also checked. A moderator is a third construct which can impact or change the relationship between the independent and dependent variables [47], [57]. This study employed constant types of data for moderation and used SmartPLS 3.3 for the analysis. This study hypothesized that:

H3: Positivity (POS) moderates the relationship between Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and Perceived Productivity (PP).

H4: Positivity (POS) moderates the relationship between Depersonalization (D) and Perceived Productivity (PP).

The Orthogonalizing Approach was conducted to assess the moderating effect using SmartPLS [58]. This approach is based on the indicator approach; thus, it requires creating all product indicators of the interaction terms [48], as presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Square Change (Source: the authors)

R^2 included moderator	R^2 excluded moderator
0.663	0.653

Creating the interaction effect between the two indicators: Perceived Productivity (PP) and Positivity (POS) was the first step. Table 8 demonstrates that R^2 for the main model was (0.653) without the interaction, while it became (0.663) with the interaction effect model, which means that the additional variance of R^2 was about (0.01). The next step was to calculate the effect size by employing this formula:

$f^2 = (R^2 \text{ included moderator} – R^2 \text{ excluded moderator}) / (1 - R^2 \text{ included moderator})$
$f^2 = (0.663 - 0.653) / (1 - 0.663)$
$f^2 = 0.029$

According to [59]'s guidelines, the effect size is "small", when it is (0.005), "medium", when it is (0.01), and "large", when it is (0.025). Therefore, as the value of f^2 was (0.029), the effect size is considered large. As demonstrated in Table 5, the beta coefficient for the interaction of POS*EE was 0.113 with p-value of 0.004, while the beta coefficient for the interaction of POS*D -> PP was 0.075 with p-value of 0.228. Therefore, the bootstrapping procedures were performed to get the significance of the relationship. As shown in Table 9, The interactions term of POS*EE (t= 2.642) is significant, for the one-tailed test, with a significant level of 0.05. Hence, the hypothesis H3 is supported, while the interaction term of POS*D -> PP (t= 0. 747) is insignificant, for the one-tailed test with a significant level of 0.05. Thus, the hypothesis H4 is rejected.

Table 9: Moderation Model Assessment (Source: the authors)

Hypothesis		Std. Beta	Std. Error	T values	f2 (For the moderation)	VIF	P values	Decision
H3	POS*EE -> PP	0.113	0.028	2.642	0.113	1.156	P<.01 (0.004)	Supported
H4	POS*D -> PP	0.075	0.101	0.747	0.017	1.015	P>.05 (0.228)	Rejected

The forthcoming step is conducting a further elaboration of the moderating phenomenon of Positivity [57], by plotting the pattern of the interaction effect to realize how the moderator changes the relationship between the independent variables Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (D) and dependent variable Perceived Productivity (PP) [57]. The lines of interaction are shown in Figure 4, which demonstrates the presence of the moderation effect of Positivity (POS) on the relationship between Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and Perceived Productivity (PP), while it reveals, as well, the absence of the moderation effect of Positivity (POS) on the relationships between Depersonalization (D) and Perceived Productivity (PP).

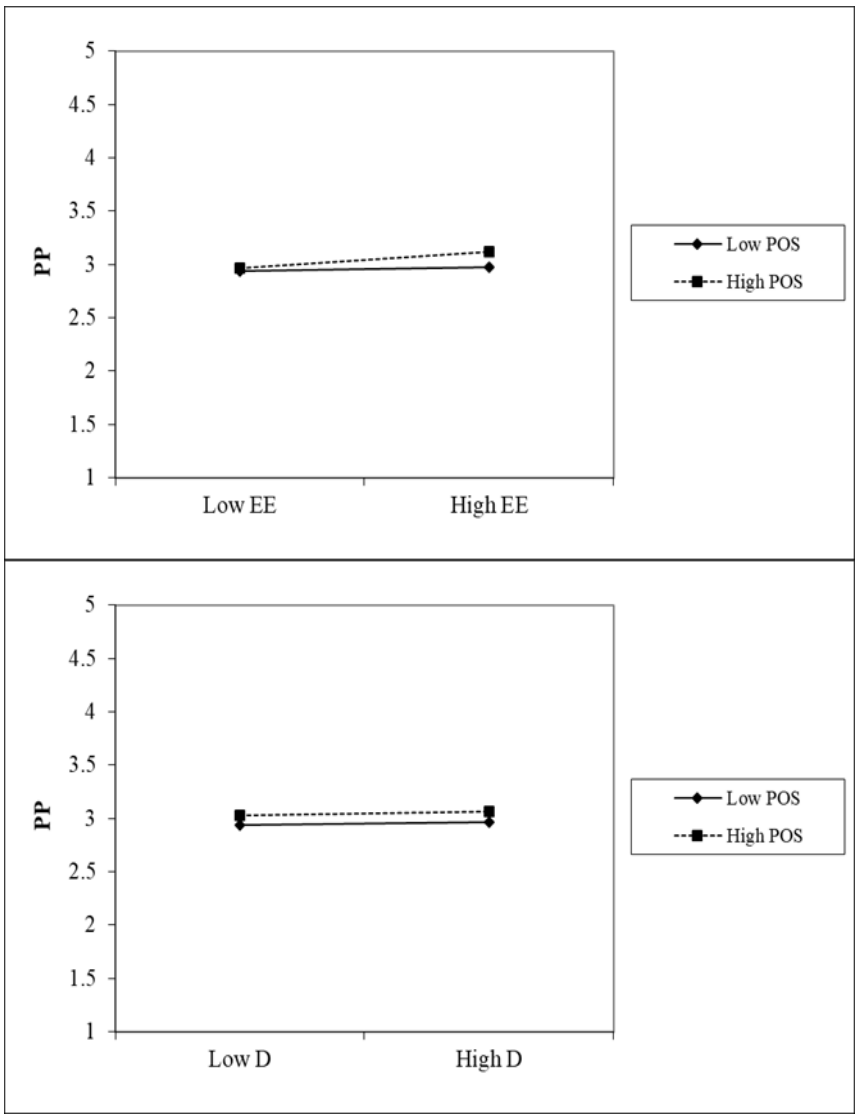

Figure 4: Moderation Effect of POS between EE, D and PP (Source: the authors)

6 Discussions

In this study, (EE) as a component of occupational burnout, was hypothesized to have a positive effect on (PP) of English academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait, and this hypothesis was supported, and the relationship between EE and PP was statistically positive and significant. Therefore, to avoid low level of PP among the English academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait, these schools should ensure that their workforce won't experience EE. This finding was supported by [31] and [32] who discovered that EE causes a negative effect on worker's productivity.

However, Depersonalization (D), as a component of occupational burnout, was hypothesized to have a positive effect on (PP) of English academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait, but this hypothesis was not supported, and the relationship between D and PP was statistically positive but insignificant, hence, D was revealed to have a low effect on PP of the English academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait, and this might be justified by the fact that PP won't be affected whether members of staff have depersonalization (i.e., have a detached reaction towards other members) or not. This finding was supported by [34] and [35] who discovered that the influence of D on PP was insignificant.

Moreover, this study hypothesized that (POS) has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between (EE) and (PP) of English academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait, and this hypothesis was supported, and (POS) played a partial moderating effect on that relationship. Therefore, the presence of POS is critical to be present among the English Academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait, to some extent, to be less emotionally exhausted and highly productive. [43] reached the same finding and concluded that positive thinking has a significant effect on the relationship between employee engagement and innovative work behaviour when it interferes as a moderator. Additionally, the moderating effect of positivity was proved to mitigate the harmful effect of burnout on extra-role performance and quitting intentions in [40] study.

However, this study hypothesized that Positivity (POS) has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between Depersonalization (D) and Perceived Productivity (PP) of English academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait, but this hypothesis was not supported, and POS did not play a significant moderating effect on that relationship. Therefore, the effect of D of the staff will have the same effect on their PP, whether they were positive or not. Many studies agreed with this study finding, such as [42] who demonstrated the absence of a moderating effect of social climate (type of positivity) on the relationship between positive practices and task performance, and [39] who proved that encountering interpersonal strain with high positivity or low positivity makes no difference.

7 Practical and theoretical implications

There are various practical implications for human resources management in this study. It suggests that an emotionally exhausted staff might have a lower productivity. However, it proposes that depersonalization has no effect on staff productivity.

Aiming at boosting the staff productivity, school superiors, principals and supervisors are required to apply some observation procedures to check whether the staff is suffering from emotional exhaustion and to apply adequate measures accordingly. Moreover, they should give due care for depersonalization, without regarding it as a basic element of the human resources assessment.

Besides, as the absence of positivity will increase the emotional exhaustion of the English academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait which will consequently affect their perceived productivity; primary schools in Kuwait should retain an adequate level of staff positivity, since it might slightly mitigate their emotional exhaustion and affect their perceived productivity.

Ultimately, primary schools in Kuwait should work on the English academic staff positivity to decrease their depersonalization, noting that preserving the staff positivity is not expected to affect their depersonalization.

Theoretically, one of the most important theoretical implications of this study is its attempt to support the existing body of literature by performing an inclusive study devoted to primary schools in Kuwait, depicting the variables that can affect the Perceived Productivity of the English academic staff, which wasn't covered totally by previous accomplished studies. Additionally, including Positivity as a moderating variable offered a new theoretical implication, by underlining how it can be incorporated into the fundamental theories of the present topic, i.e., Conservation of Resources Theory and Positive Orientation Theory.

This study was conducted to unveil the factors that are interrelated with the Perceived Productivity of the English academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait. Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization were selected as independent variables based on a thorough literature review.

8 Limitation and future suggestions

This study was restricted to two independent variables, i.e., "Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization", while the published literature reveals that other factors might have an effect on Perceived Productivity. Therefore, performing the same study with other independent variables might lead to other determinants of Perceived Productivity of English academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait.

Additionally, the quantitative research method was used only. Thus, conducting the mixed or qualitative method for future studies might be helpful in acquiring further consequences.

Moreover, this study focused mainly on primary schools in Kuwait and didn't inspect all types of schools. Hence, focussing on secondary or middle schools in Kuwait, as a case study with a methodological selection might engender various conclusions about the factors that impact Perceived Productivity.

Furthermore, this study was conducted throughout a brief period of time. Consequently, performing a similar study for a longer period of time might reinforce the outcome.

Finally, the sample of this study was limited only to the English academic staff. Accordingly, considering a larger sample size might result in more options concerning the findings.

9 Conclusion

The essential attempt of this study was to investigate the direct effect of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (components of burnout) as independent variables on the perceived productivity of primary school academic staff (heads of departments besides teachers) in Kuwait, as a dependent variable, and the indirect relationship between the pre-mentioned variables with positivity as a moderator. (EE) was proved to have a positive and significant relationship with (PP), while (D) was proved not to have a positive and significant relationship with (PP). As for the moderating effect of (POS), it proved to have a partial moderating effect on the relationship between (EE) and (PP), but it had no effect on the relationship between (D) and (PP) of English academic staff in primary schools in Kuwait.

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