

University Professors: A View from General Self-Efficacy and Work Engagement

Docentes universitarios: Una mirada desde la Autoeficacia general y engagement laboral
Professores universitários: uma olhada desde a autoeficácia e o engajamento no trabalho

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ABSTRACT. This research aims at understanding general self-efficacy and work engagement of professors of the Psychology Program of a private university in metropolitan Lima. To reach this objective, in-depth interviews with seven professors were conducted: three of them were women and four were men. Based on those interviews, it was possible to understand what personal factors have helped said professors to carry out their work as well as with what they are engaged. Finally, it was concluded that professors have self-efficacy, as they assess their skills and their environment to achieve their goals. Another finding was that they are engaged with their teaching work, and this is based on their interaction with their students, since they do more research and are up-to-date with current practices in their field.

Key words:
general
self-efficacy,
professors,
work
engagement

RESUMEN. La presente investigación busca comprender cómo se presenta la autoeficacia general y el *engagement* laboral en docentes de la carrera de psicología en una universidad particular de Lima Metropolitana. Para alcanzar dicho objetivo se realizaron entrevistas a profundidad a siete docentes: tres mujeres y cuatro varones. A partir de ellas se comprende qué factores personales les han servido a estos docentes en el ejercicio de su profesión y también con qué se encuentran ellos

**Palabras
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Autoeficacia
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engaged. Finalmente, las conclusiones a las cuales se llegó es que los docentes son autoeficaces, pues evalúan sus capacidades como su entorno para poder alcanzar el objetivo. Y también se halló que se encuentran *engaged* con su labor de docencia, esto debido a la interacción que tienen con sus estudiantes pues investigan más y se mantienen actualizados en su campo profesional.

engagement
laboral

RESUMO. A presente pesquisa procura entender como é apresentada a autoeficácia geral e o engajamento no trabalho entre professores da carreira de psicologia em uma universidade privada de Lima Metropolitana. Para alcançar esse objetivo, foram realizadas entrevistas em profundidade a sete professores: três mulheres e quatro homens. A partir delas podem-se entender os fatores pessoais que serviram a esses docentes no exercício de sua profissão, e também com que eles estão engajados. Finalmente, as conclusões encontradas são que os professores são autoeficazes porque avaliam suas capacidades, como o ambiente para poder alcançar o objetivo. Também foi encontrado que eles estão engajados com o trabalho docente, devido à interação que eles têm com seus estudantes, pois pesquisam mais e mantêm-se atualizados no seu campo profissional.

Palavras-chave:
autoeficácia
geral, professores
universitários,
engajamento no
trabalho

In the Peruvian higher education system, there are 13 undergraduate students for every college professor (Statistics Office of the National Assembly of Rectors, 2010). This is evidence that the college professor is a critical piece of the higher education due to the significant interaction they have with students (Robalino, 2005). Along the same line, the Delors commission states that the professor's work is essential to prepare youth for the twenty-first century. Also, the appreciation of the Metropolitan Lima residents—per an opinion survey—shows that 2.2% of them consider that the professor is an essential component of higher education (Tünnermann, 2013).

Considering that the professor is an influencing factor in higher education, the quality of faculty shall be taken into account. The quality of the professor cannot be measured only by the academic training he or she has received, but also by the values, competencies, and skills they have, the way they teach, and how this person manages to achieve his or her goals (Bokova, 2013).

Just like personal and professional features of the professor are deemed important, the university institution where the professor works must also be taken into consideration. These institutions have certain conditions such as their own philosophy, current legislation, and country policies, among others, all of which have a bearing on the professor's work (Alvarez, 2007). In addition, the administration style of the universities, the professor-student interaction, the relationship between teaching and non-

teaching hours, the educational model, the rules of the institution, also are also determinant for the professor's performance (Alvarez, 2007; Esteve, 1994).

It is in that sense that research has been conducted in Peru on the factors, like those mentioned above, that can affect the professors' performance because the working conditions and the professor-student interaction can generate a wearing down of the trainer (Alvarez, 2007; Fernandez, 2008). To this we may add that there is a constant faculty turnover in universities in Lima, caused in most situations by the faculty's sense of uneasiness in an institution or the notion that the financial compensation is not appropriate for that type of activity (Professor 6, personal communication, September 2, 2013; M. Grimaldo, personal communication, June 18, 2013; E. Candio, personal communication, July 7, 2015).

One of the factors that have the most impact on the professor's performance is stress, that is why the research work (Esteve, 1994; Marín & Paredes, 2002; Quaas, 2006; Sanchez de Gallardo & Mantilla de Gil, 2005; Zavala, 2008) that assesses how this variable affects their performance indicates that this factor can affect the academic aspect. In other words, the transfer of knowledge, the methodology, the assessment, and knowledge update may be negatively influenced which, in turn, would influence the students. Considering that the research done has delved into what affects the professor regarding their performance, it would be meaningful to take another look at the practice of teaching and see what factors are useful.

General self-efficacy involves each individual's abilities to organize and execute resources and actions to produce results (Bandura, 1987). Moreover, it is understood as the opinions that the individual has on his or her effectiveness and how these influence the thought patterns and emotional reactions (Ede, Hwang, & Feltz, 2011). Considering that the individual's behavior is regulated by the efficacy beliefs, Ruiz (2005) proposes four processes that occur within self-efficacy. The processes are cognitive, motivational, affective, and selective. Regarding the cognitive process, it is possible to state that any intentional behavior of the human being is influenced by the significant goals set out by each individual, and these goals will be based on the assessment that each person does on their abilities. Concerning the motivational processes, the self-efficacy beliefs influence the causal attributions, which have an impact on motivation, performance, and affective reactions. Regarding the affective processes, the beliefs that people may have about their abilities influence the potential for stress or depression that they could experience in a threatening situation, and all this affects their level of motivation (Busot, 1997). Thus, the selective processes, the choices will be made depending on the perception of efficacy to handle or not activities (Ruiz, 2005). It is worth adding that, an individual will choose to take part or not in a situation based on whether the abilities he or she has to perform in it, otherwise he or she will tend to avoid it since probably he or she will feel neither capable nor ready.

On the other hand, positive psychology presents work engagement as a motivational construct that relates positively with work; where the individual experiences high levels of energy and mental resistance (Lorente & Vera, 2010; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). People with engagement display energetic and affective connections with their work, they are proactive, propose alternatives for improvement, have values that match those of the organization, and, finally, look for and receive positive

feedback (Lorente & Vera, 2010). Work engagement includes three components: behavioral-energetic component (vigor), an emotional component (dedication), and a cognitive component (absorption) (Breso, Salanova, Schaufeli, & Nogareda, 2007; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzáles-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy, mental resilience, and activation while working; the willingness, persistence, and predisposition to invest effort in the task at hand, even when faced with difficulties in the process.

Dedication denotes being strongly involved in one's work, together with a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Moreover, absorption occurs when a person is fully concentrated and happily engrossed doing their work, when they feel that time passes quickly and one has a hard time detaching oneself from what is being done as a result of the strong level of enjoyment and concentration experienced. (Breso et al., 2007; Carrasco, De la Corte & León, 2010; Lorente & Vera, 2010; Salanova & Llorens, 2008; Salanova & Schaufeli, 2009).

Starting off from the above, it is important to understand the professor's experience in the university institutions. Consequently, this research work poses the following: How are general auto-efficacy and work *engagement* expressed in a group of professors from the Psychology study program of a private university in Lima? And the aim of this research is to respond to the above question. This study has a qualitative approach since its aim is to describe the reality of the respondent from their perspective (Salgado, 2000). In this sense, the study of both variables allows knowing the assessment performed by the faculty regarding the personal and professional resources that aid them in their professional practice, as well as their performance within the institution.

Finally, taking into account the experience of this group of professors, the academic contribution lies in singling out which personal and professional characteristics facilitate self-efficacy and being engaged, which would be useful in the practice in a similar population. Additionally, another important contribution is to know how these trainers of future psychology professionals exhibit feeling *engaged* with their work as professors. And at the level of social contribution, we attempt to obtain information on the positive professional aspects that these professors have that allows them to continue working in an institution in which the pay is not the best.

METHOD

Design

This research applies a qualitative methodology, within which the researcher concentrates on the experiences of the participants as they were felt and experienced (Sherman & Webb, 1988). This research tries to understand the professor's perspective regarding their professional practice. Also, Hernández, Fernandez, and Baptista (2010) state that the qualitative approach aims at the reconstruction of experiences of the actors of a social system.

To understand the professor's experience in the development of their functions, it is pertinent to use the phenomenological design. Since this type of design tries to recognize the perceptions and meanings of the individuals about an experience or phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In this

procedure, also, it is possible to contextualize the experience both in time and regarding the people involved and the place in which it happened (Hernández et al., 2010). Similarly, the phenomenological design allows to capture realities peculiarly, that is to say, from each individual's point of reference (Martínez, 1989 as cited in Salgado, 2000). In the same vein, this method expresses the relationship that the individual does of its own experiences, and that therefore it would not be necessary to doubt what the person thought, lived, felt, or perceived of the things that he or she did (Salgado, 2000).

Context

The district in which the private university is located is an emergent district since it houses important financial institutions, industrial organizations, supermarkets, and stores. This area is also academic since there are different types of institutions for the population. Different means of transportation can be found in this district, and this facilitates mobilization of the people within the capital. Also, its population is comprised of around 89,000 people. The families who live in the district correspond to the low and medium socioeconomic levels (Cam, Di Tolla, Fernández, & Palomino, 2012).

Participants

The participants were seven professors from the psychology study program of a private university in Lima. With the number of professors described above, we were able to reach the saturation point (Hernández et al., 2010). The criterion of theoretical saturation means that the sample has offered sufficient information on a category, i.e., that there are no additional data. Therefore this criterion will enable finding out when to stop sampling (Flick, 2007). Regarding the socio-demographic information of participants, the ages ranged between 29 to 41 years of age; and most of them were single. The group of professors included three women and four men. About the education level of the group of professors, it ranged from licentiates to doctorates. The relevant data in the work aspect are the following: work time in the institution ranged between six months and eight years. All the professors worked part time; they engage in other activities, aside from what they do at this institution. This research used the case-type sample, given that its aim is the richness, depth, and quality of the information obtained (Hernández et al., 2010). And the snowball sample selection method (Goodmand, 1961) was used, in which an interviewed person could name other colleagues, who had the chance of being selected.

Data collection instruments

Concerning the information collection instrument and techniques, the following was applied: according to Hernández et al., (2010) the collection instrument in qualitative processes is the researcher. In-depth interview was used as information collection technique. The type of interview used was semi-structured because it allowed the interviewer to follow a guide of items or questions and also to introduce questions; all of this allowed to ascertain data and obtain more information on the desired contents (Hernández et al., 2010).

The semi-structured guide was aimed at understanding how general self-efficacy and work engagement shows itself in a group of professors. This guide has six indicators, 3 for each variable, and a total of 20 questions. The indicators for general self-efficacy variable are Organization and execution of resources, Amount of resources used, and Understanding of failures. And the indicators for the work Engagement variable are Absorption, Dedication, and Vigor. Some of the questions that were used

were the following: When you must meet a goal, what do you do to reach it? (to measure amount of resources used); Tell me about a situation where things did not work (to query on how they understand failure); What do you like the most of your work? And, how would you describe your work? (capture the subjective experience of the professor: feelings).

To obtain the validity of this instrument, validity of the content was obtained through the opinion of expert judges who were licentiates (3 judges), teachers (3 judges) and doctors (4 judges), which have ample background and experience in the professional field. They evaluated the pertinence of the questions for the indicators detailed, which allowed ensuring that the information collected was suitable. To evaluate the validity of the content through the opinion of judges, it is advisable to use Aiken's V coefficient, which combines the ease of calculation with the assessment of results at a statistical level (Escurra, 1988); the 20 questions reached a V of 1.00, which implies that all judges agree. Finally, a pilot test with two professors was carried out, similar to the sample used. This pilot allowed to validate the understanding of the 20 questions of the semi-structured guide, as well as validate it in a similar population because it was performed with professors from a private university.

Validity and reliability. Validity implies that the results of the research reflect a clear image of reality, and also refers to the degree of internal logical coherence of the results and the absence of contradictions (Salgado, 2000). To increase the validity of the results, it was carried out using the qualitative data analysis strategy (Rodríguez, Gil, & García, 1996). Theoretical triangulation is part of the qualitative data analysis techniques, implying that work is being done on alternative theories to obtain a more a more comprehensive interpretation of the phenomenon (Salgado, 2000). Also, Ramallo and Roussos (2008) state that the theoretical triangulation is a possible measurement of the usefulness of the theories. Along those lines, Vallejo and Finol de Franco (2009) allude that this triangulation allows confronting the theories with the data collected, which implies a more efficient critique.

With respect to the reliability of the research, this was conducted by a single researcher; for these cases, Salgado (2000) alludes that to maintain credibility it is important to use strategies such as the handling of available technical means, i.e., the use of a voice recorder.

Procedure

To collect the information, the pilot test was first performed with two professors to determine the degree of understanding of the instrument and the questions. The professors that participated in the pilot test are not part of the final sample used for this research. Both professors advised changing the word 'mistake' in the question "tell me about a situation where you made a mistake," for "what did not work," since both mentioned that the word was strong for the type of questions and that their suggestion had the same objective but the way to propose it was more subtle. From these recommendations by the participants, the final version of the semi-structured guide was ready to be applied.

The first contact with the professors was aimed at observing the context in which they functioned, and to be able to talk with them about the interview to be conducted. In the second opportunity, we talked with them to decide on the date, place, and time of the interview.

At each interview, the professors signed an informed consent and agreed to participate in the research. They were informed of the use of the information collected in the interview and of the confidentiality and anonymity of the data. Moreover, at each interview conducted, a voice recorder was used to be able to save each interview as evidence. Later each interview was transcribed and their content analyzed; this allowed to determine the saturation point in the seventh interview. Finally, the analysis of the data was done segmenting the data to codify it, which helped to relate concepts with categories and subjects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we will present the results obtained, as well as the discussion of these under the theory used in the research. The purpose of this research is to understand how are general auto-efficacy and work engagement expressed in a group of professors from the Psychology study program of a private university in Lima. To achieve that, a semi-structured interview was conducted on seven professors, where the general self-efficacy and work engagement variables were assessed. It is important to stress that this article presents the most remarkable results to the light of the research done.

In regards to the first variable, three categories are presented: the first is (a) the amount of resources used, which refers to the cognitive process alluding to the human being's intentional behavior as influenced by the significant goals set out by each individual, and said goals as being proposed on the basis of the assessment done by each person of his or her own abilities (Ruiz, 2005). In this category, the professors indicated that the following internal factors helped them achieve their goals: being persistent and organized, and prioritizing activities that they need to perform to meet their obligations. A male professor mentions the following:

"I am the kind of person who plans every activity one week ahead or more. I usually work with an appointment book; I specify all the activities I have, I prioritize them by urgency, importance and deadline. And according to them, I decide how much time each activity will take me; that allows me to achieve the objectives that I am requested to a great extent." (Male 1, six months on the job).

Male professor 1, six months on the job, indicates that he manages to plan and organize himself according to the activities that he has or needs to complete; this connects with the capacity exhibited by this person to organize their objectives according to own capacities, so he is not going to set out goals that are over his capabilities. Additionally, the professor being conscious of those abilities that help him to reach his goals denotes that he is able to make a judgment on his own capacities and abilities, in other words, to measure which are the factors that will help him attain his or her objectives, as proposed by Chiang, Núñez, and Huerta (2005) in their research on college professors and researchers at universities in Spain and Chile. This cognitive process that the professor performs demonstrates that the objectives that they draw up in life are in agreement with their abilities and competences (Ruiz, 2005; Verhaeren, 2012).

The second category is (b) organization and execution of resources; this refers to the fact that the individual is aware of the abilities he or she has to achieve his or her goals and the external factors that

will influence their performance (Ruiz, 2005). The participants acknowledged they have internal factors that help them in their practice, as indicated below:

“It is about knowing more about motivations; perhaps my professional practice can help me a little with that, the therapeutic part; I believe that indeed, it has helped me as a professor.” (Male 2, eight years on the job).

“(…) group work is more complicated, even a little more exhausting and all eyes are on you. Having a good communicative competence helps you to maintain everybody’s attention, being able to present an idea effectively so they can interpret it in the same way. [Also], by having teaching strategies under the sleeve that help you plan and organize yourself better with them. [Since it must be taken] into account that you have a limited time, and that you must meet an objective, you cannot end the class without having met such objective, otherwise, it will delay you. Also, communication is of utmost importance and management of the three factors [time, communication, and teaching strategies] is also vital because not everybody is going to respond in the same way. Some students are very open, while others are very resistant. Then it is with the resistant ones [with] whom you must work with much strength and sometimes draw up more energy than what you have left.” (Male 1, six months on the job).

The first quote refers to one of the positive internal factors mentioned by the seven interviewees, and is that professional experience contributes to teaching. All gave indications on how their professional practice also enriched their classes, because it was not only about transmitting theoretical knowledge, but what you live on a daily basis on your professional performance. How they use their experience, as well as alternative strategies to work with the students, demonstrate the way how they organize their resources for teaching. The professors’ professional experience has a great power of influence in the perception they have of their own capacities (Covarrubias, 2014), and this type of experience is what Bandura (1997) proposes as dominion experience. The dominion experience is comprised of the way the individual perceives their results obtained based on successes or failures of their its own abilities or efforts (Castro-Carrasco, Flores, Lagos, Porra, & Narea, 2012). Along the same line, Feixas (2004) mentions in his research that part of the factors that foster development of the professors is the professional aspect derived from prior experience. This implies that the experience grants the professor the chance to improve the way he or she teaches in terms of content, and also in the strategies used. In other words, when professors recognize that they had the power to handle groups of students in the past, as well as the knowledge gathered through their professional practice, they are going to feel they have the ability to meet their goal: in this case obtaining the learning outcome of the course. The above results are similar to what Chiang et al. (2005) found in their research on professors and researchers working at private universities in Chile and Spain. These authors found that if the professors recognized which are the abilities that help them fulfil their objectives, they will feel able to fulfil their duty as professors. This denotes an interest in their students’ learning; because they have identified which are their tools that will help facilitate such learning.

The third category is (c) the understanding of failures; which refers to the process of self-efficacy beliefs that influence the causal attributions, which have an impact on motivation, performance, and

the affective reactions. That is to say, if what happened in a difficult situation was due to internal or external factors since identification of these variables will reflect on their performance (Ruiz, 2005). In regards to how professors confront a difficult situation, i.e., whether they manage to accomplish something or not, it is observed in the results that the attribution of the difficult situation was due to external factors and others to internal factors. Additionally, the feelings that surface in this situation were the following: frustration (4 professors) and see it as an improvement opportunity (3 professors). A professor indicates that having internal control helps him have a better performance when facing a difficult situation. He mentions the following:

“When I started teaching I had some disadvantages, that I can consider among the most difficult that I have been able to handle, they are basically that, among the students I had some were older than me since they were working on a second professional degree. And, in a way, they perceived that a younger individual would not be able to offer them suitable information. Then, in that case, the only way to solve the issue is, first not to lose control and second, to show them through work that one can master and handle the situation. It was the best way to solve the problem.” (Male 3, seven years on the job).

A complicated situation related to the handling of students which were older than the professor (male 3, 7 years on the job), but he was sure he had the abilities to be able to perform as a professor and making an effort to demonstrate he mastered the subject, managed to solve the disadvantage. This example demonstrates how a person with high self-efficacy conceives a problem as an opportunity where he must make an effort to overcome it, and does not consider that he lacks any abilities. This is aligned with the postulates of Verhaeren (2012) and Ruiz (2005), who both mention that the way in which the individual understands their adverse situation influences the actions they will follow, i.e., there is an impact in its motivational process where the person evaluates if he or she is going to continue advancing towards achievement of their goals.

About the categories of the work engagement variable, there are three: absorption, vigor, and dedication. The category of absorption is based on an individual perceiving that time goes quickly, displays high doses of enjoyment at work, and has a difficult time disconnecting from the task at hand. The vigor category is characterized by the subject evidencing persistence and predisposition to invest effort in the work being performed. And in the category dedication, a high labor implication is demonstrated showing a sense of pride, challenge by the work, importance, and enthusiasm (Lorente & Vera, 2010).

As far as the category of absorption, where it is observed how a professor perceives the time at work, the professors referred:

“Actually, to me time goes by quickly when you have your activities very well explained because there are different objectives. There are small objectives to achieve a larger objective at the end of the session; then each objective is subject to an activity, everything is timed, if you do it that way then it does not feel like a very longtime.” (Male 1, six months on the job).

“(…) there are some extended topics that generate interest in the students, then they ask and we try to generate a debate, and that everybody presents their points of view, and time flies.” (Female 2, seven years on the job).

Both quotes give indications on how professors perceive time; in both cases, indicating that they perceive that time passes quickly, demonstrate that both professors are involved in their work inside the classroom, because part of being engaged with their work is that they lose the notion of time or as they mention it, time flies. The above findings exhibit a relationship with the results found in the research of Salanova, Martinez, Cifre, and Schaufeli (2005) in a sample of Spanish employees from different occupational sectors. This study shows that college professors are the ones who show the highest levels of absorption. In the same vein, Csikszentmihalyi (1990, as cited in Dulanto, 2013), in a study on creativity, defines flow as an atemporal sensation caused by a pleasant activity; this same sensation appears in a similar way in the professors of this research, since they perceive that time slips their fingers (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2004).

The category of absorption is linked with the thematic category difficulty to disconnect from the task at hand, and three of the professors evaluated mentioned that it is hard for them to disconnect from their teaching work. They mentioned that they are constantly thinking about improvements for the class or are in the permanent search for information to complement what they have already taught or what they are going to teach. This is evident in this professor's allusion:

“Yes, there are always many things to do; when I get home I have to prepare reports, prepare material for the following sessions, there is always something to do (…).” (Male 1, six months on the job).

Within the same category of absorption, there is also the perception that the individuals have with the work they perform, in this case, a professor mentions:

“Well, [it is] a pleasant experience, mainly what I like is to be in contact with the students, the young people and teaching also motivate me to continue with the research, reading, updating my skills, that is what I like from this (...) I feel that I like it, it motivates to me, I feel comfortable inside the classroom, and I enjoy the interaction with younger people, I feel that it motivates me, that is what I like the most of this type of work.” (Female 2, seven years on the job).

The results of the three thematic categories demonstrate how the seven interviewees are involved in their work as professors, because they demonstrate concentration, joy in their work, as well as a hard time disconnecting from what they are doing due to the strong dose of enjoyment and concentration experienced (Breso et al., 2007; Carrasco et al., 2010; Lorente & Vera, 2010; Salanova & Llorens, 2008; Salanova & Schaufeli, 2009). The above features demonstrate the presence of engagement in the professors. Moreover, as mentioned by the cited authors, these particularities would influence a positive organizational behavior, allowing these professors to continue engaged and if we add the self-efficacy beliefs to this, we would generate what the authors call to gain spirals. These positive upward spirals, work the following way: the beliefs in the own competencies to do a good job influence

positively in engagement and this in turn allows to consolidate those beliefs in one's own self-efficacy even more (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2004, 2009; Salanova, Grau, Llorens, & Schaufeli, 2001).

The category of dedication deals with the manifestation of a feeling signification through work. That is how five professors interviewed mentioned that the special meaning for them of teaching is the transmission of knowledge. Below are two quotes in reference to the above:

"(...) It means being always up-to-date with the subject, the psychological knowledge; it means interacting with young people who have also become more involved with scientific knowledge; it's basically that. Interaction with young people who have the need for knowledge and there are several who have a need for knowledge. (...) One has a good time as a professor when the students do research, ask, propose research activities." (Male 1, seven years on the job).

"The fact itself of sharing with other people, regardless of them being students in this case, somehow also allows for teachings. In a way, it allows to extend the knowledge of each individual's personal characteristics. And, in some manner, that enriches also my work, my duty. Not only at a work level, but also at a personal level. Dealing with different types of people, different personalities, with different moods... it somehow, as I said, enriches at a work level but also at a personal level; that is what's interesting in this case." (Male 3, seven years on the job).

In the research of Salazar (2006), which deals with the characterization of the excellent college professor, two important items are highlighted: first, the professor's motivation towards the students, which leads him or her to do a better job. And the second important item is the interest shown by professors in their students' learning. Both items are demonstrated in the previous quotes. Along the same lines, in a study conducted on college professors in Bolivia, they mentioned—just like the professors in this research—that they teach for the following reasons: to transmit knowledge, the pleasant experience derived from being in contact with the students, the importance of staying updated, and to contribute to the development of the country through educations (Estudios de la Universidad, 1997). And this is in line with the results of the thematic category of work significance found in this research. Professors demonstrate to have much interest in their students and in the way knowledge is transmitted to them, which denotes the work involvement of the professors, in other words, dedication, a component of work engagement.

In the category of vigor, there are two sub-categories: the first is physical activity and the second is persistence to the goal. Regarding physical activity, it is worth noting that all the professors work part time in the university; in addition, they practice psychology in different settings. This implies that all of them are in constant physical activity since they travel from district to district within the city of Lima to be able to meet their obligations. The following professors indicate the districts they move around every week:

"I move between Chorrillos, Monterrico, Surquillo, San Isidro, and La Molina." (Female 1, seven years on the job).

"(...) Between San Isidro, Jesús María, and Miraflores." (Male 1, six months on the job).

This aspect is emphasized since the category of vigor denotes high energy levels, resistance, and mental activation while working; persistence and predisposition to invest effort in the task at hand (Breso et al., 2007; Schaufeli et al., 2002). When their predisposition to invest effort in their work in the classroom was looked into, all of them stated that the climate in the classroom has a big influence, because each group of students is different. Regarding the second sub-category, i.e., persistence toward the goal, all the professors are oriented to meet the learning outcomes that must be attained by the students. This is how one of them refers to it:

"When I do not feel satisfied it is because sometimes I was short of time. And because I had to stop before I finished and the students were left with questions. (...) [That is why she makes workshops]. The workshops are organized so they can understand because my objective is that they learn." (Female 3, seven years on the job).

The previous quote from one of the professors makes reference to the direction of all the research participants, which is to meet the goals of each class session, of the course and of their professional lives. The activity of teaching itself, in other words, facilitating the lessons; as well as commuting around different districts in Metropolitan Lima to meet their obligations is evidence that they make an effort. In other words, they go beyond the expected behavior so that their students learn; this is what (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2004) call going the extra mile, meaning to take an extra effort, to go beyond what has been proposed.

CONCLUSIONS

From the interviews conducted on the professors of the private university, it can be deduced that they are individuals who demonstrate self-efficacy because they assess their abilities and their current situation to determine how they are going to meet their objectives. Also, they evidence engagement with their activity as professors, and not as much with the institution, because many indicated to feel uncomfortable by the rules and demands and the poor communication maintained with authorities. It is important to stress that they feel engaged with their teaching work because it makes them directly involved with their activity and also because, as indicated by some authors, this is a good predictor that they display proactive personal initiative behaviors (Demerouti, Bakker, Jansen, & Schaufeli, 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Salanova & Schaufeli, 2004; Salanova, Schaufeli, Llorens, Peiró, & Grau, 2000).

From the findings of this research, the bonds existing between general self-efficacy and work engagement variables can be mentioned. Although establishing this type of connections is not the final purpose of this research, it is important to mention it, because it allows a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. The first connection occurring between both variables is the persistence of the professor as a relevant feature. That is to say, by being persistent, the professor is able to meet his or her goals, which denotes vigor in the activities performed. The professors being persistent also implies that they are able to manage their resources in order to attain their goals and this trait is both in the

category of number of resources used (general self-efficacy) and vigor (work engagement). A second relationship that appears between both variables is that the professors recognize their passion for what they do as a strength. This trait is included in the category of absorption within work engagement, and is also observed in the results obtained in the category of organization and execution of resources as a positive internal factor of general self-efficacy.

Finally, based on this research, some research topics are suggested such as: Whether there is relationship between innovation in the classroom on the part of the professors and whether the students feel engaged with the course taught. Based on some features demonstrated by the professors interviewed, Ríos (2004) indicates that with those traits (persistence, organization, and self-confidence), the professors could be innovating in the classroom. If the professors were innovating, it would be interesting to find out if the other part involved in the classroom, in this case, the student could be engaged with the course facilitated by this professor. A second suggestion is to conduct the same research with other techniques with the application of questionnaires or class observation. It would be possible to evaluate the same variables, but with a greater intervention in the field, i.e., observing classes with a checklist and verifying if those strengths mentioned by the professors are present in classes. A third suggestion would be that this research be made in other university programs within the field of health sciences, such as medicine, nursing, physical therapy, etc. This last research idea is suggested given that the professors evaluated belong to the psychology study program and, perhaps, they have a higher introspection level versus professors in other areas as a result of their professional training. Therefore, if the same variables were assessed in other populations, it would be possible to see other characteristics shown by professors that help them be engaged while teaching in their professional area.

Finally, a first limitation was not to make an immersion in the field for an extended time. Moreover, a second limitation was that when contacting other professors for an interview, some did not have time because most of them work in more than two institutions or they showed resistance to the topics they were to be interviewed about. In other words, when other professors were contacted, some of their referrals were not available and we had to ask the interviewees for the information of other colleagues who could be able to participate in the research.

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