The role of emotional intelligence in the experience of burnout among South African leaders working in financial roles

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Abstract: South African leaders serving a financial role within the corporate sector are prone to experience burnout due to the nature of their jobs. These leaders are also usually not inclined to regulate and manage emotions effectively. The purpose of this study was to determine the role of emotional intelligence in the experience of burnout. Quantitative data was obtained from financial leaders (n = 100). First, it was determined who were suffering from burnout. This was followed by MANOVAs to determine if these groups differed with regards to the display of emotional intelligence. Thereafter, stepwise regression analysis was performed to determine the extent to which emotional intelligence could predict the occurrence of burnout. Findings suggested that financial leaders who measure high on emotional intelligence were less at risk of experiencing burnout. It was also discovered that emotional self-management and emotional management of others were significant predictors of burnout.

Keywords: burnout; emotional intelligence; emotional management of others; emotional self-management; financial leaders; Genos EQ; Oldenburg burnout inventory; OLBI; leadership pipeline.

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1 Introduction

The world of work has to navigate tremendous volatility, change, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic experienced across the globe. In addition to job uncertainty, those who are still employed are faced with extended work hours and must make daily sacrifices to meet stringent deadlines. Researchers noted that South Africans are specifically known to be workaholics who spend most of their waking hours on the job (Joubert, 2014; Engelbrecht et al., 2020). Jooste (2020) determined that leaders working with the finances of their organisations ranked the highest among workaholics which places them at risk of developing burnout.

1.1 Leaders and leadership

According to the Drotter's leadership pipeline, leaders exist at all levels within the organisation (Charan et al., 2011; De Boer et al., 2012; Drotter, 2003; Hattangadi, 2016). As a result, the pipeline involves transitioning from the very bottom of an organisation or institution (*managing oneself*) to the very top (*managing the organisation*) (Charan et al., 2011; De Boer et al., 2012; Hattangadi, 2016). Transitioning involves working through six passages to become effective leaders. These passages include

a managing yourself to managing others

b managing others to leading managers

c leading managers to functional manager

d functional manager to business manager

e business manager to group manager

f group manager to organisation/enterprise manager.

Each of the six passages entails major changes in job requirements and demand the learning of new skills, more effective time management as well as work values (Dai et al., 2011). This contributes to an increase in general job demands and role complexity (Charan et al., 2011; De Boer et al., 2012). Research suggested that leaders who have the necessary personal sources, such as emotional intelligence (Jooste, 2020), mindfulness (Abdool Karrim Ismael et al., 2013), resilience, and hardiness (Mérida-López and Extremera, 2017) will be able to effectively deal with increasing job demands, thereby decreasing the probability of them suffering from burnout (Bakker and De Vries, 2021; Charan et al., 2011; De Boer et al., 2012).

1.2 Financial roles

For the purposes of this study, leaders in financial roles refer to those working in South African organisations' financial departments, dealing with day-to-day financial operations, administration, and management. These leaders' work environment is characterised by working extended hours under constant pressure to meet deadlines and ensuring the effective management of company finances and the latter's adherence to financial compliance requirements (Nevries and Payne, 2017). It is also expected of them to recover quickly from setbacks and to function optimally when faced with severe

adversity, such as the recent downgrade of South Africa's sovereign credit rating to junk status or dealing with accusations of corruption (Cameron, 2017). In addition, it is required of these leaders to be perpetually on duty and stay abreast of the latest standards and trends in finances (Stowe, 2017). As a result, leaders in financial roles have to maintain fast work tempos in the face of ever-changing job demands (Zincirkiran and Tiftik, 2013). In addition to high job demands, trends in the economy often cause a lack of job resources (Direction, 2014; Immervoll et al., 2011). A decrease in job resources contributes to a decrease in job satisfaction (Bakker and De Vries, 2021) which has an inverse correlation with burnout (Abdool Karrim Ismael et al., 2013; Bhat and Altaf, 2017; Coetzee et al., 2019).

1.3 Burnout

Although several definitions exist for the term 'burnout', they all have certain aspects in common. These commonalities relate to the notion that burnout is viewed as a complex, multifaceted response syndrome to chronic occupational stresses and insufficient recovery (Langelaan et al., 2006; Salvador and Rothmann, 2005). The presence of burnout is often measured in terms of two dimensions, namely exhaustion and disengagement.

Exhaustion is frequently viewed as the core dimension of burnout. Exhaustion is the dimension that people identify with the most (Metin, 2010; Twigg and Kang, 2011) and thus forms the primary focus of research on burnout (Penny, 2018). Xanthopoulou and Meier (2014) defined exhaustion as a state of energy-draining that takes the form of mental, emotional, and physical tiredness. Mental and emotional exhaustion denote the psychological facet of burnout. This facet refers to the perception of being emotionally drained or exhausted (Abdool Karrim Ismael et al., 2013; Barker and Nussbaum, 2011; Coetzee et al., 2019). Physical tiredness, which represents the physical facet of burnout, is associated with continually feeling drained of all energy to the extent of experiencing chronic fatigue (Barker and Nussbaum, 2011; Coetzee et al., 2019; Jooste, 2020). Both facets tend to decrease overall effectiveness in the workplace (Barker and Nussbaum, 2011). Therefore, exhaustion occurs due to protracted and intense physical, cognitive, and affective psychological and physiological strain after prolonged exposure to excessive job demands (Bosman et al., 2005).

Disengagement, on the other hand, encompasses extensive and intensive responses in terms of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural rejection of the job and describes occupational disillusionment (Jooste, 2020). Rogala et al. (2016) described disengagement as the process of withdrawing oneself from work and as this withdrawal continues, an increase in negative attitudes towards work is displayed. Initially, disengagement was considered a temporal response to exhaustion (Ford et al., 2013). This notion was dismissed when it became clear that disengagement and exhaustion, despite displaying positive correlations with one another, were two distinguishable constructs that both play an important role during the development of burnout (Coetzee et al., 2019; Ford et al., 2013; Jooste, 2020).

Contrary to the initial research findings, follow-up and elaborative studies have demonstrated that it is not only those that work in health professions that are prone to burnout (Aitken and Schloss, 1994; Hakanen et al., 2008; Kowalski et al., 2010; Kubicek and Korunka, 2015; Miller, 1995; Zapf et al., 2001), but that any individual dealing with

excessive job demands could experience burnout (Llorens et al., 2006). Abdool Karrim Ismael et al. (2013), however, noted that little research was conducted on the prevalence of burnout amongst those working in financial roles. He and his colleagues proposed that, since most research on burnout focus on job demands, job resources and job satisfaction, more research is necessary to determine which personal resources need to be demonstrated by individuals to prevent them from experiencing burnout (Abdool Karrim Ismael et al., 2013).

1.4 Emotional intelligence

Since it is the aim of this study to investigate if emotional intelligence has an impact on burnout, the former will be the only personal source to be discussed for the remainder of this paper.

Emotional intelligence refers to the set of skills or ability to recognise and regulate one's own emotions while also acknowledging others' emotions when having to make decisions and act on job demands (Dhani and Sharma, 2016; Gignac, 2010; Goleman, 2004). According to Năstasă and Fărcaş (2015), the ability to manage one's emotions and impulses and to express emotions in an assertive manner, are important personal features that could prevent the occurrence of burnout. This notion is confirmed by Lavasani et al. (2017) and Weinstein (2011), who established an inverse correlation between emotional intelligence and burnout. In a similar vein, Brand (2007) reported inverse correlations between exhaustion, and two dimensions of emotional intelligence, namely emotional management, and emotional control. Brand's (2007) findings were confirmed by a study conducted in Tehran that noted the existence of inverse correlations between emotional intelligence and emotional exhaustion (Delpasand et al., 2011).

Emotional intelligence also plays a significant role in the experience of job satisfaction and personal growth (Lubbadeh, 2020). According to Gujral (2013), leaders that display high emotional intelligence cope better with personal and professional challenges, interpersonal conflicts at the workplace, boss-subordinate relationships, and relationships with peers. On the other hand, Rani and Yadapadithaya (2018) found that those displaying low levels of emotional intelligence will be easily overwhelmed by job demands. Despite this evidence, a search of all relevant literature revealed that little research has been done in South Africa to investigate if emotional intelligence has an impact on burnout experienced by leaders serving a financial role. The present study, therefore, aimed to

a investigate the prevalence of burnout among South African leaders working in financial roles

b determine if significant differences occur with regards to emotional intelligence between leaders who are experiencing burnout and those who are not

c establish the impact of emotional intelligence on burnout.

2 Research methodology

2.1 Research design

In keeping with the dearth of research on the topic within the South African context, a cross-sectional exploratory research design was employed. Akhtar (2016) noted that an exploratory design is more appropriate when little research knowledge is available. The research design was thus used to gain insight into, and become more familiar with, the subject area of the role of emotional intelligence in the prevention of burnout.

2.2 Sampling and sample

Purposive sampling was used to identify participants for the study. The sample was drawn from South Africa's medium to large organisations. The human resources departments of these organisations were approached to assist with identifying participants for the study. In order for participants to be included in the study, they had to

a work in a financial role in the corporate sector

b operate within any one of Drotter's leadership passages

c be fluent in English since the measurement instruments used were English versions.

Permission was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Pretoria to conduct the study. All participants were assured that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point without facing negative consequences. Written consent was obtained from participants before the study started. Confidentiality was ensured by assigning participant numbers to those included in the sample.

The final sample consisted of 100 (n = 100) participants of whom more than half (n = 55) was female.

Table 1 Age distribution of sample

		Age group coded			
		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	20–30 years	23	23.0	23.0	23.0
	31–40 years	47	47.0	47.0	70.0
	41–50 years	17	17.0	17.0	87.0
	51–60 years	11	11.0	11.0	98.0
	61–65 years	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The majority (n = 47) of the sample falls within the 31–40 years age group. The levels of leadership according to Dotter's leadership pipeline are presented in Table 2.

As evident in Table 3, participants spent an average of 5.25 years (SD = 5) within their position, and on average 7.09 years (SD = 5.96) in their respective organisations.

Table 2 Level of leadership of sample

Level of leadership					
		Frequency	*Percent*	*Valid percent*	*Cumulative percent*
Valid	Manage a company	16	16.0	16.0	16.0
	Manage a function	40	40.0	40.0	56.0
	Manage a team	29	29.0	29.0	85.0
	Manage self	15	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 Position and organisation tenure of sample

		Tenure	
		Position tenure	*Organisation tenure*
N	Valid	100	100
Mean		5.25	7.09
Std. deviation		5	5.96
Minimum		0	0
Maximum		21	21
Percentiles	25	2.00	3.00
	50	3.00	5.50
	75	7.00	10.00

3 Materials

The measure instruments used in the study were the Oldenburg burnout inventory (OLBI) and the Genos EQ.

3.1 Oldenburg burnout inventory

The OLBI was used to distinguish between those experiencing burnout and those who were not. The OLBI overall consists of 16 items which is divided into two subscales namely exhaustion and disengagement. Each subscale consists of eight items that are measured on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = disagree; and 4 = strongly disagree). Both subscales include four items that are positively worded and four items that are negatively worded. The OLBI is regarded as a highly reliable instrument (Bosman et al., 2005). Test/retest reliability of instrument yielded a Cronbach's α value of 0.85 (Demerouti and Bakker, 2008). A high internal consistency of $\alpha = 0.88$ and $\alpha = 0.83$ respectively, was obtained when considering the South African context (Abdool Karrim Ismael, 2010; Coetzee et al., 2019). The overall Cronbach's α coefficient for the current sample was 0.88. The Cronbach's α coefficient for the exhaustion subscale was 0.86 and 0.74 for the disengagement subscale.

3.2 Genos EQ

The Genos EQ self-report inventory consists of 70 items designed to measure the frequency with which an individual displays emotionally intelligent behaviours across seven dimensions (ten items per dimension). These dimensions are

a emotional self-awareness

b emotional expression

c emotional awareness of others

d emotional reasoning

e emotional self-management

f emotional management of others

g emotional self-control.

Participants respond by means of a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 'almost never' to 'almost always', where 1 = almost never; 2 = seldom; 3 = sometimes; 4 = usually; and 5 = almost always. Scores are automatically calculated by the Genos online bureau system. According to the Genos EQ Certification Manual (version 14), reliability coefficients obtained for the instrument's overall score and subscale scores all exceeded $\alpha = 0.70$, with a further total score of $\alpha = 0.945$ obtained with regards to the Genos EQ test/retest reliability (Palmer and Stough, 2007). Similar scores were obtained when the Genos was utilised with South African studies within a business and leadership context (Kamps and Engelbrecht, 2011; Du Plessis et al., 2020). The Cronbach alphas coefficients obtained by the Genos in the current study are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4 Reliability statistics obtained for the Genos EQ

Subscales	*Cronbach's alpha*	*Sample size*	*N of items*
Emotional self-awareness	0.748	100	10
Emotional expression	0.821	100	10
Emotional awareness of others	0.868	100	10
Emotional reasoning	0.665	100	10
Emotional self-management	0.794	100	10
Emotional management of others	0.827	100	10
Emotional self-control	0.844	100	10
Overall	0.958	100	70

3.3 Data collection procedures

The two instruments were converted to electronic versions using type form. An electronic link to these was emailed to the participants who then completed the forms online.

3.4 Data analyses

All the data obtained was captured and analysed using SPSS version 24©. In addition to calculating descriptive statistics and determining the internal reliability by means of computing Cronbach alphas, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to determine if significant differences existed between the burnout group and non-burnout group with regards to emotional intelligence. In addition, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if the presence of emotional intelligence will have an impact on burnout.

4 Results

Parametric techniques were used during data analysis since the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality indicated that the data across the psychological measures was normally distributed.

The OBLI was employed to determine the prevalence of burnout among the sample. Those participants scoring 2.50 and higher (≥2.50) were categorised as the burnout group, whilst those scoring below 2.50 (<2.50) were categorised as the non-burnout group (personal communication with Bakker, 2017). The non-burnout group consisted of 67 (n = 67) participants and the burnout group had 33 (n = 33) participants. Burnout was therefore prevalent amongst a third of the sample and was less than expected.

Table 5 displays the descriptive statistics obtained by the two groups on the subscales of the OLBI as well as their overall scores.

Table 5 Descriptive statistics of the OLBI scores for the burnout group (n = 33) and non-burnout group (n = 67)

Descriptive statistics			
OLBI categories	*Mean*	*Std. deviation*	*N*
Disengagement			
Non-burnout group	1.99	0.31	67
Burnout group	2.51	0.24	33
Total	2.16	0.38	100
Exhaustion			
Non-burnout group	2.20	0.43	67
Burnout group	3.01	0.35	33
Total	2.47	0.56	100
Overall			
Non-burnout group	2.10	0.32	67
Burnout group	2.76	0.19	33
Total	2.31	0.42	100

To determine if significant differences exist between the two groups with regards to burnout as measured by the OLBI, a MANOVA was performed. The first step was to conduct multivariate tests. The results are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6 OLBI: multivariate tests

Multivariate tests							
Effect		*Value*	*F*	*Hypothesis df*	*Error df*	*Sig.*	*Partial ETA squared*
OLBI category	Pillai's trace	0.55	59.83[b]	2.00	97.00	<0.001	0.55
	Wilks' lambda	0.45	59.83[b]	2.00	97.00	<0.001	0.55
	Hotelling's trace	1.23	59.83[b]	2.00	97.00	<0.001	0.55
	Roy's largest root	1.23	59.83[b]	2.00	97.00	<0.001	0.55

Note: [b]exact statistic.

Pallant (2016) indicated that the Wilks' lambda is most often used to determine if significant differences occurred between groups. When studying the Wilks' lambda displayed in Table 6, it demonstrates that significant differences ($p < 0.01$) occurred between scores obtained by the burnout and non-burnout group on the OLBI overall scores and the scores of its subscales. The next step was to perform tests of between-subject effects. The results are displayed in Table 7. The Bonferroni adjustment applied was set at 0.017.

Table 7 OLBI: tests of between-subjects effects

Tests of between-subjects effects							
Source	*Dependent variable*	*Type III sum of squares*	*df*	*Mean square*	*F*	*Sig.*	*Partial ETA squared*
Corrected model	OLBI: disengagement	5.99[a]	1	5.99	70.90	<0.001	0.42
	OLBI: exhaustion	14.30[b]	1	14.30	85.78	<0.001	0. 47
	OLBI: overall score	9.70[c]	1	9.70	120.48	<0.001	0.55
Intercept	OLBI: disengagement	446.64	1	446.64	5,284.01	<0.001	0.98
	OLBI: exhaustion	600.37	1	600.37	3,601.48	<0.001	0.97
	OLBI: overall score	520.67	1	520.67	6,465.84	<0.001	0.98
OLBI category	OLBI: disengagement	5.99	1	5.99	70.90	<0.001	0.42
	OLBI: exhaustion	14.30	1	14.30	85.78	<0.001	0.47
	OLBI: overall score	9.70	1	9.70	120.48	<0.001	0.55

Notes: [a]R-squared = 0.420 (adjusted R-squared = 0.414).
[b]R-squared = 0.467 (adjusted R-squared = 0.461).
[c]R-squared = 0.551 (adjusted R-squared = 0.547).

The results of Table 7 shows that there were significant differences between the burnout and the non-burnout groups on the disengagement and exhaustion subscales as well as on the overall score of the OLBI ($p < 0.017$). The ETA squared values reported in Table 7 indicate that the effect sizes obtained were large in all three instances (Pallant, 2016).

Similar to the OLBI, MANOVA was also used to determine if significant differences exist between the burnout and non-burnout groups with regards to emotional intelligence as measured by the Genos. Descriptive statistics for the Genos scales across the two groups were calculated first. The results are displayed in Table 8.

Table 8 Descriptive statistics for the Genos scores of burnout group (n = 33) and non-burnout group (n = 67)

Descriptive statistics	*OLBI categories*	*Mean*	*Std. deviation*	*N*
Genos: emotional self-awareness	Lower than 2.50[a]	4.17	0.43	67
	2.5 and higher[b]	3.99	0.38	33
	Total	4.11	0.42	100
Genos: emotional expression	Lower than 2.50[a]	4.03	0.50	67
	2.5 and higher[b]	3.62	0.58	33
	Total	3.89	0.56	100
Genos: emotional awareness of others	Lower than 2.50[a]	4.09	0.48	67
	2.5 and higher[b]	3.68	0.49	33
	Total	3.96	0.52	100
Genos: emotional reasoning	Lower than 2.50[a]	3.94	0.40	67
	2.5 and higher[b]	3.69	0.34	33
	Total	3.86	0.40	100
Genos: emotional self-management	Lower than 2.50[a]	3.93	0.43	67
	2.5 and higher[b]	3.47	0.57	33
	Total	3.78	0.53	100
Genos: emotional management of others	Lower than 2.50[a]	4.11	0.44	67
	2.5 and higher[b]	3.78	0.46	33
	Total	4.00	0.47	100
Genos: emotional self-control	Lower than 2.50[a]	4.06	0.47	67
	2.5 and higher[b]	3.65	0.70	33
	Total	3.93	0.59	100

Notes: [a]non-risk group.
[b]risk group.

Multivariate tests were performed to determine whether there were significant differences between the burnout and non-burnout groups with regards to emotional intelligence. Table 9 displays the results of the multivariate tests obtained on the subscales of the Genos.

Table 9 Genos: multivariate tests

Multivariate tests							
Effect		*Value*	*F*	*Hypothesis df*	*Error df*	*Sig.*	*Partial ETA squared*
OLBI category	Pillai's trace	0.22	3.699[b]	7.00	92.00	0.001	0.22
	Wilks' lambda	0.78	3.699[b]	7.00	92.00	0.001	0.22
	Hotelling's trace	0.28	3.699[b]	7.00	92.00	0.001	0.22
	Roy's largest root	0.28	3.699[b]	7.00	92.00	0.001	0.22

Note: [b]exact statistic.

Table 10 Genos: tests of between-subjects effects

Tests of between-subjects effects							
Source	*Dependent variable*	*Type III sum of squares*	*df*	*Mean square*	*F*	*Sig.*	*Partial ETA squared*
Corrected model	Emotional self-awareness	0.71[a]	1	0.71	4.16	0.044	0.04
	Emotional expression	3.67[b]	1	3.67	13.23	<0.001	0.12
	Emotional awareness of others	3.81[c]	1	3.81	16.21	<0.001	0.14
	Emotional reasoning	1.44[d]	1	1.44	9.80	<0.001	0.09
	Emotional self-management	4.68[e]	1	4.68	20.29	<0.001	0.17
	Emotional management of others	2.48[f]	1	2.48	12.63	0.001	0.11
	Emotional self-control	3.68[g]	1	3.68	11.90	0.001	0.11
Intercept	Emotional self-awareness	1,472.59	1	1,472.59	8,616.99	<0.001	0.99
	Emotional expression	1,293.79	1	1,293.79	4,669.81	<0.001	0.98
	Emotional awareness of others	1,335.81	1	1,335.81	5,678.70	<0.001	0.98
	Emotional reasoning	1,285.54	1	1,285.54	8,734.48	<0.001	0.99
	Emotional self-management	1,212.57	1	1,212.57	5,254.95	<0.001	0.98
	Emotional management of others	1,375.07	1	1,375.07	7,010.08	<0.001	0.99
	Emotional self-control	1,316.78	1	1,316.78	4,253.47	<0.001	0.98
OLBI category	Emotional self-awareness	0.71	1	0.71	4.16	0.044	0.04
	Emotional expression	3.67	1	3.67	13.23	<0.001	0.12
	Emotional awareness of others	3.81	1	3.81	16.21	<0.001	0.14
	Emotional reasoning	1.44	1	1.44	9.80	0.002	0.09
	Emotional self-management	4.68	1	4.68	20.29	<0.001	0.17
	Emotional management of others	2.48	1	2.48	12.63	0.001	0.11
	Emotional self-control	3.68	1	3.68	11.90	0.001	0.11

Notes: [a]R-squared = 0.041 (adjusted R-squared = 0.031).
[b]R-squared = 0.119 (adjusted R-squared = 0.110).
[c]R-squared = 0.142 (adjusted R-squared = 0.133).
[d]R-squared = 0.091 (adjusted R-squared = 0.082).
[e]R-squared = 0.171 (adjusted R-squared = 0.163).
[f]R-squared = 0.114 (adjusted R-squared = 0.105).
[g]R-squared = 0.108 (adjusted R-squared = 0.099).

As was the case previously, Wilks' lambda was the preferred multivariate test. The Wilk's lambda value in Table 9 shows that there were significant differences ($p < 0.01$) between the scores of the two groups with regards to emotional intelligence. Tests of between-subjects were performed across the Genos' subscales. The Bonferroni adjustment was set at 0.071. The results are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10 indicates significant differences were displayed between the burnout and non-burnout groups based on all seven EQ subscales ($p < 0.071$) measured. Large effect sizes ($\eta 2p \geq 0.138$) were obtained for emotional self-management ($\eta 2p = 0.17$) and emotional awareness of others ($\eta 2p = 0.14$). Medium effect sizes ($0.06 \leq \eta 2p < 0.138$) were obtained on emotional expression ($\eta 2p = 0.12$), emotional management of others ($\eta 2p = 0.11$), emotional self-control ($\eta 2p = 0.11$) and emotional reasoning ($\eta 2p = 0.09$) while emotional self-awareness ($\eta 2p = 0.04$) demonstrated a small effect size ($\eta 2p < 0.06$).

Since significant differences were observed on all of the subscales of the Genos, it was decided to determine which of these scales were significant predictors of the occurrence of burnout and will therefore have an impact on the latter. As a result of the multitude of subscales used, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted. Step one of the analyses involved the inclusion of all of seven subscales of the Genos. Table 11 provides information on the number of variances explained by the final model.

Table 11 Model evaluation | Genos

Model summary[b]				
Model	*R*	*R-square*	*Adjusted R-square*	*Std. error of the estimate*
1	0.581[a]	0.338	0.324	0.34656

Notes: [a]predictors: (constant), Genos_Emotional management of others, emotional self-management.
[b]dependent variable: OLBI_Overall_Score.

Table 11 indicates that 33.8% of the variance in the OLBI overall scores was explained in the final model obtained through the stepwise regression analysis.

Table 12 Statistical significance of model evaluation results | Genos

ANOVA[a]						
Model		*Sum of squares*	*df*	*Mean square*	*F*	*Sig.*
1	Regression	5.944	2	2.972	24.745	0.000[b]
	Residual	11.650	97	0.120		
	Total	17.594	99			

Notes: [a]dependent variable: OLBI_Overall_Score.
[b]predictors: (constant), Genos_Emotional management of others, emotional self-management.

Table 12 shows that two of the independent variables entered into the final model were significant predictors of burnout. Table 13 indicates the variables that were found to be significant predictors of burnout.

Table 13 Evaluation of the independent variables | Genos

Coefficientsa								
Model		*Unstandardised coefficients*		*Standardised coefficients*	*T*	*Sig.*	*Collinearity statistics*	
		B	*Std. error*	*Beta*			*Tolerance*	*VIF*
1	(Constant)	4.372	0.304		14,369	0.000		
	Emotional self-management	–0.280	0.095	–0.349	–2.939	0.004	0.484	2.068
	Emotional management of others	–0.250	0.107	–0.277	–2.333	0.022	0.484	2.068

Note: [a]Dependent variable: OLBI_Overall_Score.

Table 13 indicates that the strongest predictor of burnout was emotional self-management (beta = –0.349; $p < 0.05$) followed by emotional management of others (beta = –0.277; $p < 0.05$). These results suggested that a decrease in the individual's emotional self-management and emotional management of others will increase the possibility of burnout to occur.

5 Discussion

When taking South African demographics into account, the sample appeared to be balanced in terms of sex. The majority of the participants fell within the 31 to 40 years age group ($n = 47$) and managed a function ($n = 40$) as described by Drotter's (2003) leadership pipeline. The participants spent an average of 5.25 years (SD = 5) within their position, and on average 7.09 years (SD = 5.96) in their respective organisations.

Table 5 indicates that 33 participants experienced burnout while 67 did not display any burnout symptoms. The prevalence of burnout amongst participants was less than expected. These findings form a stark contrast with other research results where burnout was more prevalent amongst those leaders working in financial roles (Chong and Monroe, 2015; Laba, 2004; Orpen-Lyall, 2008; Zincirkiran and Tiftik, 2013). The findings also challenge Maslach et al.'s (2001) notion that individuals in the age group of 31 to 40 years are prone to experience burnout. One possible explanation for the conflicting results is that the leaders represented in the non-burnout group, which was larger than the burnout group, were able to successfully transition through the stages of Drotter's (2003) pipeline, thus increasing their ability to deal with job demands (Charan et al., 2011; De Boer et al., 2012; Hattangadi, 2016).

Despite the smaller size of the burnout group, the significant differences obtained on the OLBI and its subscales between the burnout group and non-burnout group confirmed the presence of burnout amongst the former (see Table 7). The higher scores obtained on the exhaustion subscale confirmed research findings indicating that exhaustion is a core dimension of burnout (Metin, 2010; Twigg and Kang, 2011). Exhaustion is often the result of the over-consumption or depletion of energy sources (Bakker et al., 2004; Basinska and Gruszczynska, 2020; Bosman et al., 2005; Demerouti and Bakker, 2008). Such exhaustion is characterised by the experience of severe tiredness which in turn has a

negative impact on cognitive, physical, and emotional abilities (Bakker et al., 2004; Basinska and Gruszczynska, 2020; Bosman et al., 2005; Demerouti and Bakker, 2008). This causes leaders to display cognitive weariness and physical fatigue that impede their ability to meet their job demands. Once leaders' ability to meet job demands is under strain, they will not be able to function optimally in their respective organisations and productivity recedes (Bakker and De Vries, 2021; Jooste, 2020).

The significant differences between the burnout and non-burnout group on disengagement (see Table 7) indicates that the burnout group is more inclined to disengage or reject their financial related job from an emotional, cognitive, and behavioural perspective (Jooste, 2020). Disengaged leaders tend to be more cynical and often display a loss of enthusiasm for their work (Makara-Studzińska et al., 2019; Schaufeli, 2017). They will separate themselves from their colleagues, work content and even the organisation as a whole (Basinska and Gruszczynska, 2020). Disengagement is also associated with the experience of occupational disillusionment (Makara-Studzińska et al., 2019; Schaufeli, 2017). As was the case with exhaustion, disengagement and occupational disillusionment also have a negative impact on job performance that was shown to have a negative association with productivity (Bakker and De Vries, 2021; Jooste, 2020).

Since the burnout and non-burnout groups differed significantly with regards to both exhaustion and disengagement, it appears that the burnout group is unable to deal with their workload in an efficient manner and experience more stress as a result thereof (Vesty et al., 2018). Keeping Drotter's (2003) pipeline in mind, one could argue that a contributing factor to this inability to efficiently deal with workload relates to leaders' ability to transition through the pipeline. Charan et al. (2011) noted that leaders who are unable to sufficiently deal with their workload tend to be those who have not successfully transitioned through the *initial* passage of the leadership pipeline. Drotter (2003) explained that this transition involves moving from managing self to managing others. The greatest challenge during this transition is to teach others to do the work instead of doing it yourself (Charan et al., 2011). De Boer et al. (2012) viewed the improvement of individual abilities and collaborating with others as the most important skill obtained during this stage. Failing to obtain this skill causes leaders to become ineffective in managing their own as well as other's workload. This often results in an increased workload that requires more time at work (Engelbrecht et al., 2020; Jooste, 2020). Coetzee et al. (2019) note that copious amounts of time spent at work and little rest will result in the experience of chronic stress. Research conducted by Abdool Karrim Ismael et al. (2013) and Coetzee et al. (2019) indicated that the continuous experience of chronic stress will ultimately result in burnout.

Rani and Yadapadithaya (2018) asserted that individuals measuring high on emotional intelligence are not subjected to the adverse effects of chronic stress and subsequent burnout since they deal more effectively with job demands and exhibit efficient management strategies. In a similar vein, Dhani and Sharma (2016) theorised that those who are able to regulate their own emotions will be able to deal with stressful job demands. These notions are supported by the significant differences observed between the burnout and non-burnout groups when measuring their respective emotional intelligence levels by means of the Genos (see Table 10). The present findings also confirm the results of Zysberg et al.'s (2017) study which indicated that burnout was

experienced due to a lack of effective emotional regulation and management. In light of the discussion above, one could assume that leaders displaying emotional intelligence will be less at risk of developing burnout when dealing with the intense job demands associated with the financial roles in which they serve (Barkley, 2013; Lavasani et al., 2017; Weinstein, 2011).

Despite the evidence that emotional intelligence will decrease the risk of burnout, the results of the stepwise regression analysis only identified two dimensions of the Genos EQ as significant predictors of burnout (see Table 12). Table 13 indicates that the strongest predictor of the two is emotional self-management. According to Palmer et al. (2009), emotional self-management refers to the skill of managing your own emotions. The results suggest that leaders who foster and nurture positive emotions through activities such as mindfulness (Abdool Karrim Ismael et al., 2013) will be better equipped to deal with stress which will decrease their propensity to develop burnout (Gignac, 2010; Jooste, 2020). The results furthermore corroborate Benson et al.'s (2007) findings which noted that emotional control, recognition, and understanding of one's own emotions are all significant predictors of burnout.

In addition to the above, it is argued that Drotter's (2003) pipeline could also be applied to explain how growth in emotional intelligence equip leaders with the skill to deal with job demands. It is posited that leaders who have successfully transitioned through the initial passage of Drotter's (2003) leadership pipeline (managing yourself to managing others), will be able to regulate their emotions since they are actively aware of such emotions and acknowledge them. This will be followed by acquiring the ability to manage other's emotions, which is interestingly the second predictor of burnout according to Table 13. To be more specific, Palmer et al. (2009) noted that the emotional management of others referred to the skill one has to positively influence the emotions of others. Zapf et al. (2001) determined that burnout is closely associated with leaders' inability to successfully deal with the emotions of their co-workers and/or subordinates. Jooste (2020) concluded that effective leaders are known for their ability to provide physical as well as emotional support, especially in organisations where job demands are high, and resources are low. Such leaders contribute to the establishment of positive work environments (Lubbadeh, 2020) where stress levels are manageable and the possibility of burnout occurring is low (Coetzee et al., 2019; Jooste, 2020).

Looking back at the discussion presented above, it seems clear that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in the prevention of burnout. Although Drotter's (2003) pipeline were developed to illustrate which passages leaders need to transition through to make them effective leaders that will successfully deal with excessive job demands, it appears that the initial passage could also be associated with growth in emotional intelligence. Such growth will better prepare leaders to deal with the job demands of those in financial roles.

The association between the initial passage of Drotter's (2003) pipeline and the dimensions of emotional self-management and emotional management of others might explain why these are the only dimensions of the Genos EQ that were identified as significant predictors of burnout. When one revisits the remaining passages of Drotter's (2003) pipeline, it is evident that they do not correspond to the remainder of dimensions of the Genos EQ (Palmer et al., 2009). It is however, recommended, that more research is needed on the matter.

6 Conclusions

Some of the leaders participating in the study experienced burnout. These leaders experience increased levels of exhaustion and will disengage from their work environment. The burnout and non-burnout group demonstrated significant differences concerning emotional intelligence, signalling that the presence of the latter plays a role in the experience of burnout. This was confirmed when it was established that the presence of emotional management of self and emotional management of others will result in the absence of burnout. It appears that transitioning through Drotter's (2003) original passage of managing oneself to managing others will provide leaders with the necessary job-related skills and emotional ability to effectively deal with the job demands associated with financial roles, thus decreasing the probability of burnout from occurring.

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