



# ***Burnout & Engagement in Universities***

Stress is the “global health epidemic of the 21st century.”

World Health Organization

## **What makes work so stressful?**

## A frenetic way of working:

### Being hyper connected and responsive to work anytime, anywhere, can be extremely taxing

In a study conducted by IBM Institute for Business Value in late 2015, a survey of 5,247 business executives from 21 industries in over 70 countries reported that the **“scope, scale and speed”** of their businesses were increasing at an accelerated rate, especially as the competitive landscape becomes increasingly disrupted by technology and radically different business models.

In the 2016, the sixth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) showed that:



One-third of workers in the EU work to tight deadlines and at high speed.

One worker in five (22%) works in their free time to meet work demands several times a month.

The survey confirms the importance of customers in dictating the rhythm of work: 68% of workers report that their pace of work is dependent on direct demands by customers.

The social climate in work is generally positive, 89% of workers stating they enjoy good cooperation with their colleagues.

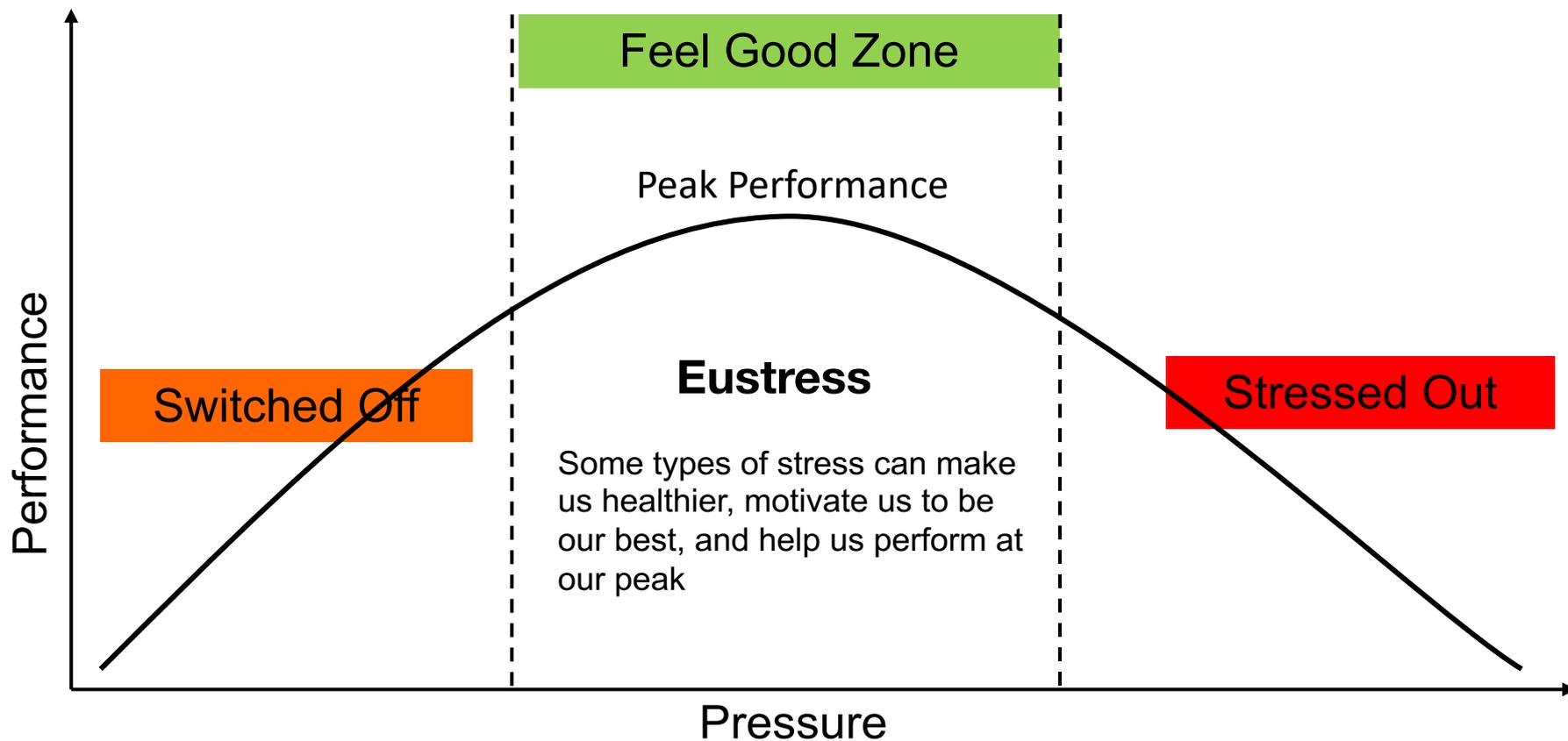
Over the last four decades, research has begun to elucidate how workplace demands contribute to, and affect, wellbeing of those working **within the higher education sector**

Surveys all over the world of university staff have concluded that **academia is no longer a comparatively low-stress working environment**, identifying both mounting workload and an increasing pressure both to publish and acquire external research funding as significant contributory factors to academic distress

**scope, scale and speed**

Teacher stress potentially impairs personal and professional competence and compromises productivity.

# Not all stress is created equal...

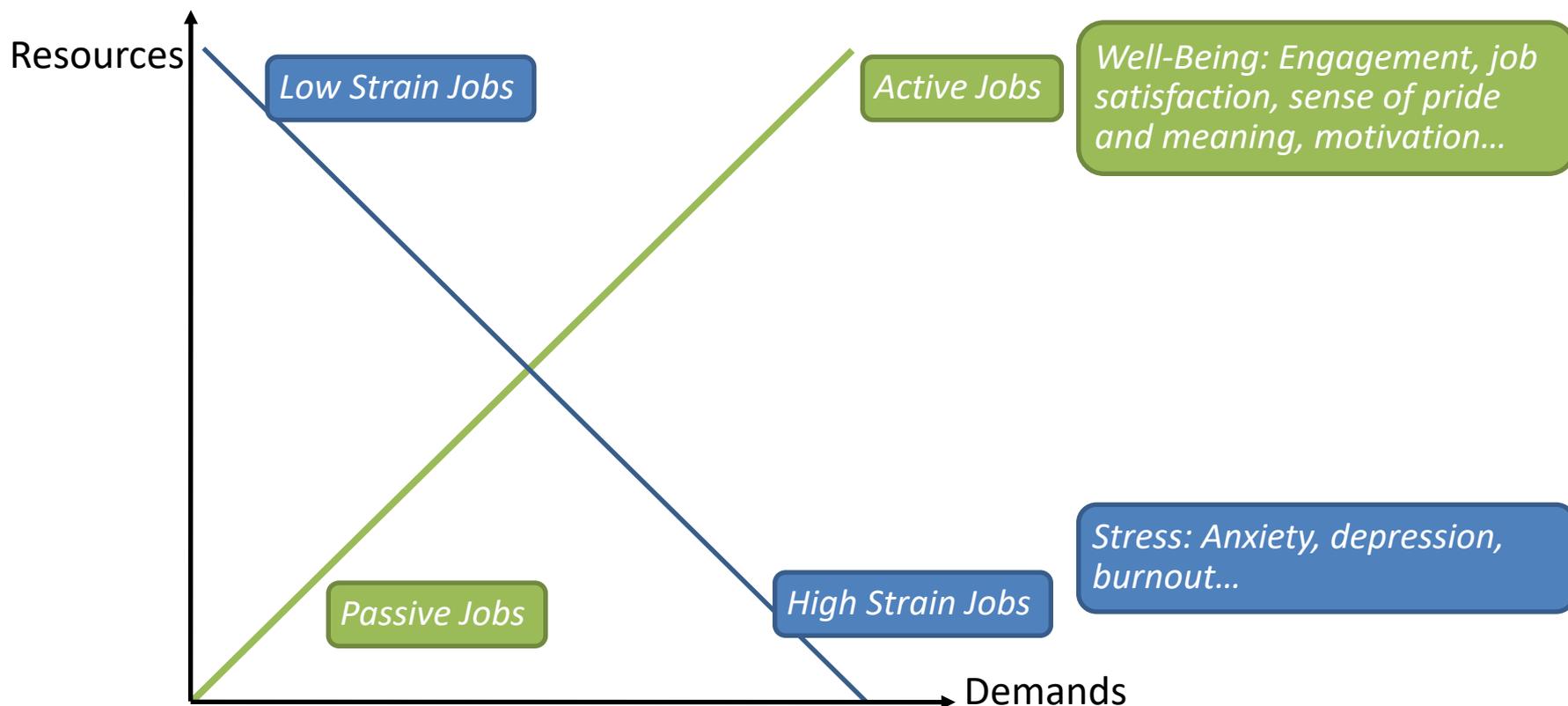


## Not all stress is created equal...

The Demands–Control Model (DCM) articulates job stress as the result of high workplace demands coupled with a perception of low control (Karasek 1979).

# Job Demands-Control Model

Karasek & Theorell, 1990





## Occupational phenomenon

World Health Organization, 2019

“a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, cynicism and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity .”

Maslach, 1993

## Burnout:

❖ Emotional Exhaustion refers to feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one's emotional resources

❖ Cynicism refers to a negative and excessively detached response to other people and reflects a dimension of interpersonal relations

❖ Reduced Personal Accomplishment, which consists in the self-evaluation component, and refers to a decline in one's feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work

## Engagement:

❖ Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties

❖ Dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge

❖ Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work

## PROFILES THAT MIX BURNOUT AND ENGAGEMENT

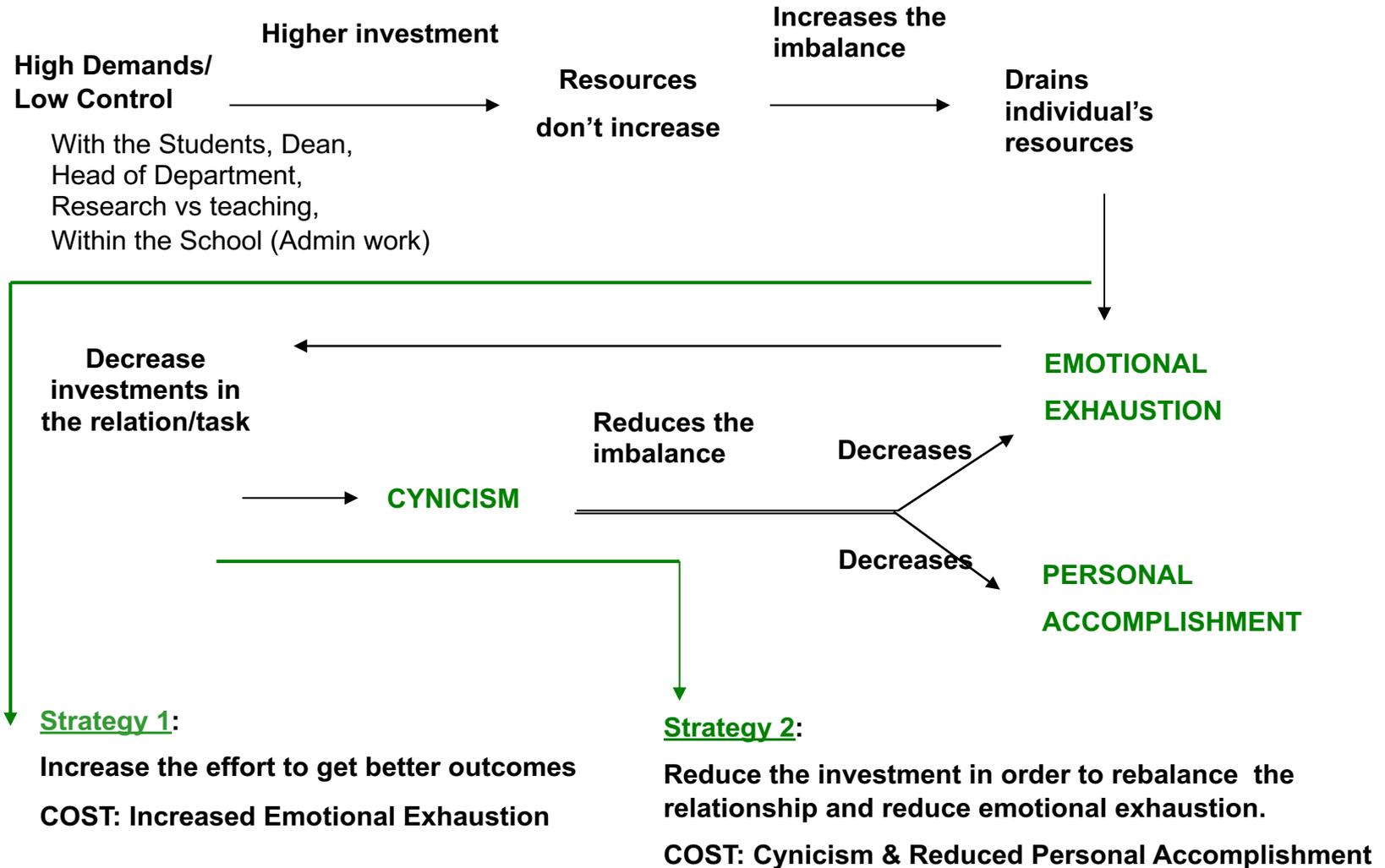
### Burnout

- **Burnout**  
Three high negative scores
- **Disengaged**  
Cynicism is the only high negative score
- **Overextended**  
Exhaustion is the only high negative score
- **Ineffective**  
Personal accomplishment is the only low score

### Engagement

High scores on vigor, dedication and absorption.

**How  
did I  
get  
there  
???**



# Psychological Stressors at Work

## ■ Task related and organisational stressors

High workload, time pressure  
Role conflicts, organisational constraints

## ■ Social stressors – colleagues, supervisors, subordinates

Negative social climate- Poor social support from peers  
Task conflicts, relationship conflicts  
Unfair behaviour, Justice, destructive leadership, workplace bullying

## ■ Social and Emotional stressors – Students

Student-related social stressor: Aggressive students, exaggerated student/school expectations (constant evaluations; entertaining vs. pedagogy?)  
Emotional dissonance

## ■ Job insecurity and unemployment

# What creates person-job fit?

- Satisfaction of core psychological needs promotes worker motivation and psychological well-being.
- Seven core needs:
  - Autonomy
  - Belongingness
  - Competence
  - Positive emotions
  - Psychological safety
  - Fairness
  - Meaning

Azeem, S.Y. & Nazir, N.A. (2008). A Study of Job Burnout among University Teachers. *Psychology and Developing Societies* 20(1), 51–64.

Borg, S. & Alshumaimeri, Y. (2012). University teacher educators' research engagement: Perspectives from Saudi Arabia. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 28, 347-356.

Lackritz, J.R. (2014). Exploring burnout among university faculty : incidence, performance, and demographic issues. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 20, 713–729

Li, Y. (2014). Building affective commitment to organization among Chinese university teachers: the roles of organizational justice and job burnout. *Educ Asse Eval Acc*, 26, 135–152.

Otero-López, J.M., Mariño, M.J.S., & Bolaño, C.C. (2008). An integrating approach to the study of burnout in University Professors. *Psicothema*, 20 (4), 766-772.

Reddy, G.L. & Poornima, R. (2012). Occupational Stress and Professional Burnout of University Teachers in South India. *International Journal of Educational Planning & Administration*, 2(2), 109-124.

Watts, J. & Robertson, N. (2011) Burnout in university teaching staff: a systematic literature review, *Educational Research*, 53(1), 33-50.

Zhong, J., You, J, Gan, Y., Zhang, Y., Lu, C., & Wang, H. (2009). Job stress, burnout, depression symptoms, , and physical health among Chinese university teachers. *Psychological Reports*, 105(3), 1248-1254.