



A Review on the Well-being of School Teachers

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Abstract

Well-being implies an overall healthy body and mind and encompasses physical, social, and emotional factors. The well-being of an individual plays an essential role in all aspects of his/her life, and teachers work is immensely affected by their well-being. Teachers as nation builders, have abundant responsibility on their shoulders and they play an important role in building a sustainable society. However, the work conditions and various environmental factors at times impact their well-being. The present study is a review of studies conducted on the well-being of teachers. For this purpose, eight research papers spanning from 2019 to 2022 have been reviewed. The present study intends to find out the various factors that have an impact on the well-being of school teachers in different countries and also analyze the course of action that is being adopted or suggested to promote teachers' well-being. The study is crucial as it will help the stakeholders understand the components that need to be focussed on while dealing with the teachers' well-being.

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Keywords: well-being, school teachers, work conditions, review

Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined positive mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make contributions to his or her community” (WHO, 2001) ^[26]. Well-being means being physically and mentally healthy and being happy and content in life. The concept of well-being includes individuals' overall satisfaction, domain-specific well-being, and emotional experiences (Diener, 2000, 2017 as cited in Li *et al.*, 2022) ^[10, 21]. “Well-being includes the presence of positive emotions and moods (e.g., contentment, happiness), the absence of negative emotions (e.g., depression, anxiety), satisfaction with life, fulfillment and positive functioning” (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Frey & Stutzer, 2002) ^[3, 14]. The concept of well-being has been defined by the experts (e.g. Diener 1984; Ryff, 1989) ^[9, 24] with various components which, according to them are the vital aspects when well-being is to be assessed.

Ensuring the well-being of teachers is very vital. Teachers are the most important resource for the development of a nation (Zakaria *et al.*, 2021) ^[27] and most of the time they are under a lot of work pressure with much expectation from society that ultimately results in burnout (Cui & Ma, 2023) ^[8]. Burnout, a physical and mental exhaustion is quite a common problem among teachers worldwide (Agyapong *et al.*, 2022) ^[1]. It is crucial for the stakeholders to ensure that teachers' teaching abilities are upgraded over time and that their general well-being is taken care of because they play such a big part in the frontlines of education (Jimenez, 2021) ^[16]. Teacher well-being will aid in the overall improvement of teaching effectiveness and benefit the learners as well (Duckworth *et al.*, 2009) ^[13]. Teachers influence the learners they are teaching, so if they are physically and mentally healthy, then it will consequently lead to a positive classroom environment (Jimenez, 2021) ^[16]; it will also have an effective impact on the learners' emotions and their learning effects (Cui & Ma, 2023) ^[8]. On the contrary, too much work and negative environment may lead to low job satisfaction and research shows that teachers with low job satisfaction, experience burnout, depression, and anxiety (Méndez *et al.*, 2020) ^[22].

School teachers have to face situations of all kinds with the students, colleagues, principal, parents and added to all this is the responsibilities of their own home and family. As Agyapong *et al.* (2022) ^[1] emphasized that elementary and high school teachers have to ensure timely delivery of the curriculum and also constantly deal with students' discipline issues; they also have to deal with their own personal day-to-day stressors, which adds to the pressure. Thus, if a teacher lacks well-being then it will be difficult for him/her to deal with the job responsibilities. The well-being of many teachers definitely took a toll during the Covid-19 when the entire education system became technology based. During the lockdown in 2020, online education began and conducting classes on online platforms had many challenges for the teaching community. The Covid-19 phase increased the stress and anxiety of many teachers around the world. Teachers experienced high levels of emotional exhaustion, stress, and job ambiguity (Chan *et al.*, 2021, as cited in Kupers *et al.*, 2022) ^[7, 19]. They had to use technology which was new for many teachers and simultaneously cater to the emotional demands of students.

Keeping in mind the stress and anxiety the teachers usually face, which increased during the lockdown phase, the present review focused on the studies conducted on the well-being of teachers in the last four years.

Research Questions

Given the significance of teachers in our society, it is crucial

to comprehend the aspects that have an impact on their well-being. The current study examines the well-being of teachers worldwide and summarizes the variables that affect their well-being. The study also carefully considers suggestions for interventions to enhance teachers' well-being. Thus, the following research questions were addressed in the study:

1. What are the factors that affect the well-being of teachers?
2. What are the suggestions for improving the well-being of the teachers?

Methodology

Search strategy of studies

The journal databases of ERIC, Google Scholar, Science Direct, Springer, Elsevier were searched for research articles with keywords such as "well-being of teachers," the "well-being of secondary teachers," the "well-being of primary teachers," and "promoting the well-being of teachers." Eight studies were selected from 2019 to 2022. Only those studies were included that were related to the well-being of teachers and were in the English language. After scrutinizing the titles and abstract, 20 studies were selected, eight were finalized, and the rest were excluded as those studies were meta-analysis and review papers.

The included studies were categorized and analyzed under the following headings:

- 1) Author name and year
- 2) Country
- 3) Objectives
- 4) Sample
- 5) Findings

Table 1: The included studies were categorized and analyzed under the following headings

S.no.	Author name and year	Country	Objectives	Sample	Findings
1.	Barbieri <i>et al.</i> , 2019 ^[4]	Italy	To look into the connection between the sociodemographics, professional background, and well-being of Italian teachers.	Data from the 2015 wave of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 6,491 high school teachers	The working environment is viewed favourably by teachers in terms of the availability of sufficient people and physical resources and possibilities for professional growth. Results also emphasise the crucial part that transformational leadership plays in defining a teacher's well-being.
2.	Buskila & Chen-Levi 2021 ^[6]	Israel	To investigate how school principals are perceived by teachers as supporting their well-being.	- 53 teachers -46 female and 7 male	Principals have a significant impact on teachers' well-being. School leaders can be more effective if they concentrate on EIs.
3.	Dreer 2022 ^[12]	Germany	This study examined contributions of school climate and job crafting to teacher well-being.	564 German teachers	Results of this study highlight the importance of both school climate and job crafting for supporting teacher well-being.
4.	Kun & Gadanecz 2022 ^[18]	Hungary	The goal of this study was to examine the connection between teachers' psychological resources and workplace well-being and reported workplace happiness using the notion of psychological capital.	297 participants -201 female, 93 male, three respondents did not indicate their gender -The mean age of the participants was 41.4	Future efforts to improve employee well-being must consider positive contributing variables and use a proactive, goal-oriented approach to well-being promotion.
5.	Kupers <i>et al.</i> 2022 ^[19]	Denmark	To investigate how teachers handled teaching during lockdown and what resources and demands were most pertinent for various teachers.	307 teachers 80% female 30-39 age group	Pro-active, supportive supervisors and connectedness with colleagues proved to be crucial job resources during the lockdown.
6.	Lau <i>et al.</i> 2022 ^[20]	Hong Kong China	To measure the reported stress, well-being, and related aspects among the teachers in Hong Kong.	-336 teachers -53.6% women and 46.4% men - 20 to 65 years	There is a need to allocate more attention and resources to improve the mental health of school teachers in Hong Kong
7.	Li <i>et al.</i> 2022	Taiwan	To examine the relationships between student behaviour (disruptive behaviour, engagement), teacher behaviour (positive, negative), daily (morning and end of working), and personal general well-being of school teachers	20 Taiwanese primary school teachers -90% females	The cycle between teachers' situational experiences in educational settings and their personal life (such as sleep quality and cultural background) is what defines their well-being.

8.	Zakaria <i>et al.</i> 2021 ^[27]	Malaysia	This study looks at the quality of teachers' working lives, including their psychological, social, political, and economic demands, in National Secondary Schools (SMK) and Government-Funded Religious Schools (SABK).	300 teachers from seven schools	The results of the study showed that the level of teachers' well-being is high. There were no differences regarding the level of teachers' well-being between SMK and SABK.
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Discussion

The studies reviewed were mostly from Asia and Europe. Four studies were from Asian countries (Buskila & Chen-Levi, 2021; Lau *et al.*, 2022; Li *et al.*, 2022; Zakaria *et al.*, 2021) ^[21, 6, 20, 27] and the other four studies were from European countries (Barbieri *et al.*, 2019; Kupers *et al.*, 2022; Dreer, 2022; Kun & Gadanez, 2022) ^[4, 12, 19, 18]. While some studies dealt with all the primary, secondary, and special teachers, few studies were only related to high school teachers. The various factors related to teachers' well-being have been discussed after reviewing the studies.

Factors that impact Teachers' well-being

Student's disruptive behavior

Li *et al.* (2022) ^[21] conducted a study with the intention of finding whether students' behaviour has an impact on teachers' emotions. They took 20 teachers as participants from primary schools in Taiwan and found that when teachers had students with higher disruptive behavior during teaching, then they had higher levels of negative emotions in class. Teachers with higher positive emotions had higher work enjoyment at the end of the working day. Negative emotions made the teachers exhausted. Importantly the study found that good sleep had an impact on positive emotions. This indicates that physically if the teachers look after their sleep patterns and lead a healthy lifestyle that may help them in nurturing positive emotions. Similar results were found in other studies as well (Ruiter *et al.*, 2020; Aldrup *et al.*, 2018) ^[23, 2].

School/Workplace conditions

Dreer (2022) ^[12] found that school climate has an impact on the teachers' well-being. School climate includes factors such as "teachers' feelings of belonging to the school community (affiliation); the openness of the school towards new methods and development (innovation); adequate school equipment, such as teaching materials and media (resource adequacy); teachers' autonomy and participation in school decisions (participatory decision-making) and the quality of teacher-student relationships (student support)" (Johnson *et al.*, 2007 as cited in Dreer, 2022) ^[17, 12].

Barbieri *et al.* (2019) ^[4] also studied the influence of the school environment on teachers well-being in Italy. In this study, the data was collected from 6491 high school teachers. The findings showed that adverse working conditions, such as a lack of resources and teaching personnel, had a detrimental impact on teachers' well-being and made them dissatisfied with their jobs.

Kun and Gadanez (2022) ^[18] studied the determinants of workplace well-being using Seligman's PERMA model. Workplace happiness was found to relate positively with all "psychological factors (hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism); and all well-being dimensions (positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and achievement)." Zakaria *et al.* (2021) ^[27] reported that teachers wellbeing depends on the positive school climate, Factors

such as the relationship between teachers and colleagues and economic satisfaction can keep the climate healthy and it will motivate the teachers to give their best in the teaching-learning process.

School Principal/Administrator

Buskila and Chen-Levi (2021) ^[6] concentrated on how Israeli teachers saw their principals as having particular attributes that would support teachers' well-being. As the institution's leader, school administrators have a crucial role in fostering a healthy learning environment and monitoring the well-being of the faculty. Buskila and Chen-Levi (2021) ^[6] have discussed the behaviors that are a part of the emotional intelligence construct "formulated by Goleman *et al.* (2004) ^[15] as leadership competencies of 'Primal Leadership'." Teachers at the school emphasized the necessity for the principal to foster a supportive environment in the classroom and to regularly communicate with them to stay informed of their professional and personal requirements.

The importance of the role of school principals/heads was emphasized by Barbieri *et al.* (2019) ^[4]. According to the study, school administrators can significantly enhance teachers' well-being by supporting certain policies that promote transformational leadership and participative decision-making. When there are enough resources and the right policies in place, the working environment at the school has a good effect on the welfare of the teachers. Principals have a crucial role because they must manage daily operations and interactions with students and teachers.

Work pressure during Covid 19

Teachers faced added stress during COVID-19 because they had to address the emotional and educational needs of students taking online programmes and classes. Confusion and stress have been identified by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation as negative effects of school closures. Kupers *et al.* (2022) ^[19] have discussed in their study what led certain teachers to adjust well while others faced problems during the lockdown. A cross-sectional mixed-method study was adopted by them. Data were collected from primary, secondary, vocational and special education teachers from Denmark. It was found that stress level of teachers was not much, and the authors of the study concluded that this could be as the data was collected in the beginning of Covid-19 and work pressure and stress on teachers had built up over time. Given that, there were more female teachers in the study and that they were in the 30- to 39-year-old age range, the study concluded that this subgroup of teachers experienced significant levels of stress in addition to the demands of their jobs at home and with their students. Another study of teachers' well-being during Covid 19 was conducted by Lau *et al.* (2022) ^[20]. This study was conducted on teachers working in primary, secondary and special schools in Hong Kong. A descriptive cross-sectional design was used and data were collected from 366 teachers (53.6% women and 46.4% men). It was reported that teachers in

Hong Kong have a high level of perceived stress, and in this study too the majority of participants (87.6%) were under a high level of perceived stress. The study did not find any age or gender-related differences for perceived stress. The study also found that compared to primary and secondary school teachers, special school teachers had significantly higher levels of stress. Work satisfaction was found to be a positive predictor of teachers' well-being. Long hours of online teaching and increasing student achievement gaps were cited by many teachers as their top concerns, and many also described feeling stressed, worn out, and depressed as a result.

These studies indicate that teachers had profound work pressure and had to accomplish their tasks in stressful conditions that must have affected their mental health.

Suggestions to enhance the well-being of teachers

The reviewed studies showed that there are various factors that impact the teacher's well-being. None of the reviewed studies had any experimental intervention to help the well-being of teachers. However, there were suggestions regarding how teachers' mental health can be improved and sustained. Kun and Gadanez (2022) ^[18] recommended developing certain programmes to improve teachers' self-efficacy, optimism, and resiliency. Lau *et al.* (2022) ^[20] recommended developing programmes for managing stress, "mindfulness-based interventions" and "organizational interventions (e.g., redesigning work, establishing flexible work schedules)". Li *et al.* (2022) ^[21] suggested "training projects" that assist teachers in gaining beneficial experiences and recovering from work-related stress or weariness. Kupers *et al.* (2022) ^[19] emphasized the importance of "working as a team." Supervisors should take the initiative to maintain contact with individual teachers as well as create opportunities for teachers to interact among themselves. Buskila and Chen-Levi (2021) ^[6] suggested promoting the "emotional intelligence" of school principals so that they can handle the emotions of teachers adequately and thus aid in improving the well-being of teachers.

Conclusion

The present review highlighted factors such as handling the emotional aspect of teachers, the various aspects of the school environment, and the role of school principals in promoting the teachers' well-being. Teachers need a lot of emotional and psychological support in the work environment. A positive work environment can ease their work pressure and make them happy. The stakeholders need to plan and implement the various workshops and counselling session for teachers in different countries. Their well-being should be taken as a primary concern.

The study has its limitations as only eight papers were reviewed. For a further understanding of how teaching community can be brought within the purview of well-being, more studies on interventions for promoting well-being need to be conducted and reviewed.

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