

# *Teacher Well-being: A Literature Review*

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**Abstract:** Teachers' well-being plays an salient role in teachers' professional development, students' academic success and psychological health, and a positive school atmosphere. However, current research on this issue is largely fragmented, so it is important to assess what has been studied and gain meaningful insights through a structural review of the literature. This literature review analyzes the existing research on teacher well-being from theories, antecedents, outcomes, and interventions of teacher well-being. According to the literature review, four theoretical models are applied to analyze antecedents and outcomes of teacher well-being. Personal and organizational antecedents have positive or negative influences on teacher well-being. Teachers with high levels of well-being can improve teacher professional development, students' academic success and mental health, and create supportive learning atmospheres and environments in school settings. Training in class management ability, emotional regulation ability, coping ability, interpersonal ability and work-life balance ability have become more critical and beneficial to teachers. Implications and recommendations for future research are proposed.

**Keywords:** teacher well-being, stress and burnout, emotional competence, training and intervention, literature review

## 1. Introduction

Teachers plays a imperative role in educational practise, and students' success , development and well-being are the primary objectives. There are many pieces of researches that focus on improving students' school life experience. However, research shows that improving teachers' well-being is a prerequisite for improving students' well-being [1]. Since the 21st century of Managerialism [2], the role of the teacher has been increasingly challenging and complicated, with teachers reporting poor mental health compared to other vocation [3][4], since the the governments around the world carry out reforms aimed at improving education with a magnitude and haste [2]. There were many studies showed that teachers all over the world experience high levels of workload stress and emotional exhaustion [5]. For example, a survey including 3004 education staff shows that well-being in the sector is poor and continues to reduce, 78% of school teachers are stressed [6]. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in England study showed that school teachers are experiencing higher than average levels of mental health disorders [7]. Based on challenges faced in the teaching profession, more and more teachers are considering leaving their positions. A survey in Australia shows that 8% of respondents indicated that they would remain in teaching for 1, 5 or 10 years, and 53% of teachers would not recommend teaching as a career [8]. The research topic of teacher well-being drew more

attention during and after the COVID-19 pandemic since teachers mental health during this time experienced a significant variation. A Poland study showed that the variation of stress, anxiety and depression of teachers' increased by 39%, 10% and 34%, respectively [9]. A reviewed article published in 2023 showed that Teachers reported high workloads and classroom management demands, which led to stress, burnout, and mental health problems [10].

Education is a extremely emotional career, connected to high emotional demands for students, and can result in negative impacts on teachers including work dissatisfaction, mental illness, and diminished well-being, so researcher, administrator, and policymakers are becoming increasingly care about the well-being of teachers who are the main contributor to students' well-being [11]. The significance of teacher well-being has made it the subject of numerous studies which can be divided into four main research topic: (1) the definition of well-being, (2) the antecedents of well-being, (3) the outcome of well-being, (4) the inventions of well-being. Some research reviews attempt to systematically present the research trend of teachers well-being and provide comprehensive understanding about this research areas [12][13][14][15]. However, there are still some gaps in the research areas of teacher well-being. First, at present, studies on teacher well-being are relatively scattered, which to some extent prevents other researchers from gaining meaningful and conclusive implication from it. Second, the literature review still misses out some important aspects of teacher well-being, especially the interventions method of well-being which is scattered in some experimental research. Finally, there were few articles summarizing the theories of teacher well-being, which may hinder a better understanding of its' nature. So, the purpose of this paper is to make an updated review on the basis of the existing research, and make up for the shortcomings of the existing research.

This paper is arranged as follows: First, the definition and scope of teacher well-being are discussed. Second, an integrative framework for teacher well-being based on existing researches are proposed to analyze literature more logically. Third, this paper reviews articles and summarize findings in five aspects which include the theories, the measures, the antecedents, the outcomes, the interventions of teacher well-being. Finally, this review discusses implications, limitations and opportunities for future research.

## 2. What is teacher well-being

There is no consensus on the definition of well-being in academic circles, one definition of well-being from World Health Organization seems by far the most widely cited: "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" [16]. When it comes to teacher well-being, researchers pay more attention to teachers' satisfaction and feelings brought by professional experience [17][18]Based on literature of positive psychology, Van Petegem defined teacher well-being as "a positive emotional state that is the result of a harmony between the specific context factors on the one hand and the personal needs and expectations towards the school on the other hand." [19] Acton, R and Glasgow, P defines teacher well-being as a personal sense of satisfaction, fulfillment, purposefulness and happiness that comes from interactions with students and colleagues [20].

In order to understand teacher well-being better, some researchers tried to divide it into several dimensions based on philosophical and psychological theories. For example, Maricuțoiu, L. P. grouped teachers' well-being into two general categories: hedonic and eudaimonic well-being based on existing researches and the initial philosophical class, hedonic well-being refers to life satisfaction and positive and negative effects in the workplace, while the eudaimonic well-being refers to psychological functioning and self-realization, psychological functioning include some negative emotional experiences, such as depression, anxiety, stress, burnout, mental health, boredom, while self-realization refers to teacher's reports of engagement, involvement, self-efficacy, sense of personal accomplishment [21]. In psychological perspective, well-being is also linked to

psychological resilience which is an ability to bounce back from adversity [22]. To distinguish from well-being in general, Van, Horn. et al proposed and tested a multidimensional model for occupational well-being which includes emotional, cognitive, professional, social and psychosomatic dimensions [23].

### 3. Review of the studies

#### 3.1. Review framework

Since teacher well-being became a prevalent research topic, several studies have done literature reviews on this field. Through the review of several literature reviews, it is found that the framework of the review mainly explores the development process of teacher well-being [24], review for a certain group of teachers [25][26], the effect of teacher well-being on students' experience [27]. One article reviewed 774 articles from 1968 to 2021 from three aspects: nature, antecedents and effects of teacher well-being [28]. On the basis of this framework, this paper reviews articles on teacher well-being from four dimensions: theories, antecedents, outcomes and interventions, as shown in Figure 1.

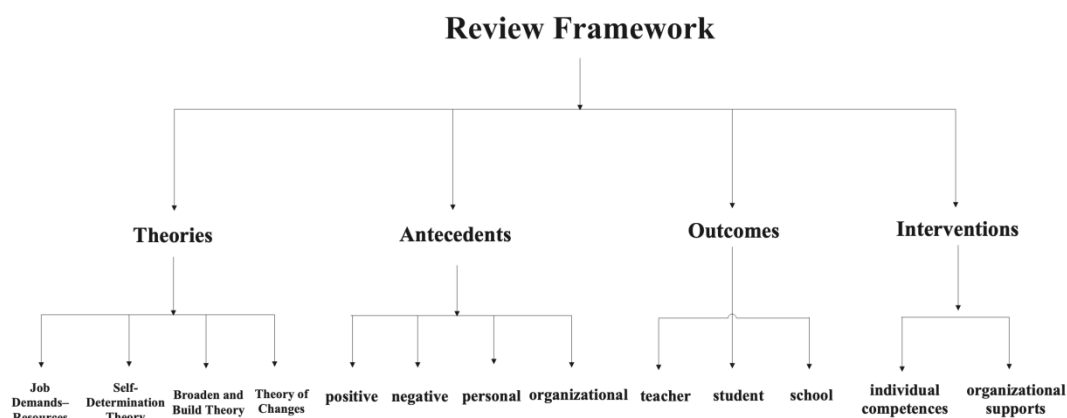


Figure 1: Review framework.

#### 3.2. Theory models of teacher well-being

There are four types of theoretical models used to analyze teacher well-being. The Job Demands–Resources Model is the most frequently used one, which is utilized to analyze the antecedents of teacher well-being. Job Demands–Resources Model contained two dimensions: job demands and job resources. Job demands refers to physical or psychological cost of the job, like workload, role conflict, performance evaluation, while the job resources are aspects of the job that can protect individuals from negative impacts of job demands and promote personal growth and achievements, such as social support and autonomy in work place [19][30]. Meng applied Self-Determination Theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory to examine the relationships among teachers' basic psychological needs satisfaction related to work, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction [31]. Based on the relationship between emotion and well-being, Broaden and Build Theory was used by Greenier to investigate the role of emotion regulation and psychological well-being as predictors of work engagement [32]. In the training of teacher well-being area, the Theory of Changes was used to explain how certain teacher programme improve teacher well-being, which then improves the classroom outcomes [33].

### 3.3. Measures of teacher well-being

Without a unified definition, teacher well-being has been measured using a wide variety of well-being scales. Some researchers recommended using indicators of teaching efficacy and job satisfaction, school-level support, and workload pressure to approximate well-being [34]. Some researchers use emotional exhaustion (Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey) and job satisfaction scales to measure teacher's well-being [35]. The World Health Organization Well-Being Index was employed to assess emotional well-being [36]. The Satisfaction with Life Scale proposed by Diener was used to assess whole satisfaction [37]. The Subjective Happiness Scale could help to evaluate whether a person is happy or unhappy [38]. PERMA Profiler (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment) [39] was utilized by Reppa, G to investigate the influence of self-efficacy on the well-being of teachers in primary school [40].

In a review article on methods to evaluate teacher well-being, outcome tools were grouped into 8 categories: general subjective well-being, general occupational well-being, teacher-specific well-being, teacher self-efficacy, school-related factors, positive psychological constructs, negative psychological constructs, and physiological well-being [34]. Negative mental health tools were the most widely used compared to other assessment tools. Paying too much attention to the negative psychometric tools of health makes people have an incomplete understanding of teachers well-being. So, Fox suggest that researchers should combine positive and negative factors as well as individual and contextual factors to measure teacher well-being [34].

### 3.4. Antecedents of teacher well-being

Exploring the antecedents of teacher well-being has become one of the main areas of concern for many scholars. This paper grouped antecedents of well-being into two main categories : negative or positive, personal or collective. In the first category, there is more research focused on investigating antecedents which have positive impacts on teacher well-being, which includes professional identity [41], mindfulness and job resources [42], adaptability [43], extraversion and emotional stability [44], resilience [45], school connectedness [46][47], gratitude and job crafting [48], interest in work [49], social support [50], job stability and instructor autonomy [18], coping strategies [25], exercise [29], meditation [33]. A research shows that self-efficacy in promoting student engagement was the most weighty predictor for well-being of teachers [40].

Antecedents which have negative impacts on teacher well-being include distance learning [51], classroom acoustic conditions [52], stress and burnout [53], negative affect [54], disruptive students behavior [55][56], job ambiguity [35]. In order to present clearly the antecedents of teacher well-being, this paper classifies the positive and negative factors from the two dimensions of individual and collective, as shown in Table 1.

As can be seen from Table 1, the current research on the antecedents of teachers mainly focuses on personal positive factors, which drew the researcher's focus on investigating training or intervention methods for individual teachers instead of improving organizational or social obstacles. However, it should be noted that these antecedents are not completely separated in the practical settings, but may intertwined with each other, which corresponds to the social interaction theory. Therefore, future studies are needed to measure school-level factors that could influence teacher stress, such as the community aspects, administrative environment and school financial resources [57].

Table 1: Antecedents of teacher well-being.

personal	organizational

Table 1: (continued)

positive antecedents	professional identity gratitude and job crafting adaptability extraversion resilience emotional stability self-efficacy interest in work meditation exercise coping strategies	job resources instructor autonomy job stability school connectedness social support
negative antecedents	negative affect disruptive student behaviour	distance learning classroom acoustic conditions stress and burnout job ambiguity

### 3.5. Outcomes of teacher well-being

As mentioned early in this paper, teacher well-being is the main contributor to students well-being, which also the key reason why more and more scholars are focusing on this research field. This paper grouped the outcomes of teacher well-being into three areas : teacher, student and school culture, as shown in the Table 2.

From an individual teacher's perspective, the level of well-being could affect teaching enjoyments [58], burnout [59], motivation [60], engagement and facing challenges [61], teaching effectiveness [62]. A study suggested that well-being and resilience of teachers are key contributors in their professional life because they prevent burn-out [63], which could help school administrators to take some measures to prevent teacher from turnover and resignation.

Teacher well-being could affect students-related variables, such as students attitudes [64], students academic outcomes [65], students grades and school satisfaction [66], students' well-being and engagement [21], students progress [50]. For example, high levels of teachers' life satisfaction, an indicator of teacher well-being, had a positive and significant impact on students' physical and mental health, as well as perceived support from teachers [67]. Arens, A. K. and Morin, A. J. S utilized emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction as teacher well-being indicators, and their study showed that well-being is a salient predictor of teaching effectiveness and positive educational outcomes [64].

Teachers with higher levels of well-being have a supportive effect on students by shaping a positive interactive atmosphere and environment. Especially the student–teacher interactions [14] positive emotional atmosphere [55] and classroom environment [62]. According to the literature, environment is the medium through which teachers influence students, the Prosocial Classroom model explained that well-being of teachers has an indirect relationship to student outcomes through supportive teacher-student relationships and effective classroom management strategies [68].

Table 2: Outcomes of teacher well-being.

individual teacher	students	school culture
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Table 2: (continued)

outcomes	teaching enjoyments burnout motivation engagement facing challenge teaching effectiveness	students progress student attitudes academic outcomes school satisfaction well-being engagement subjective mental and physical health	emotional atmosphere classroom environment student–teacher interactions
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### 3.6. Interventions of teacher well-being

In the research field of teacher well-being, more studies focus on the personal antecedents of teacher well-being, which leads to the intervention of well-being mainly to improve the individual ability of teachers, which is called self-conducted interventions by Rinne and Jenni, they found that researchers using either physical or psychological exercise to enhance teacher well-being [69]. Individual skills that can be improved by intervention programmes include emotional regulation skills [70], coping strategies [71], class management skills [72], maintaining good relationships with other social relationships [29], mindfulness training [33], connecting well with students [53].

Some researchers also focus on organizational factors, aiming to enhance teachers well-being by improving job conditions which includes changing school management methods or institutional culture. Interventions from the school mainly conclude providing availability of resources [73], minimizing time pressures and narrowing the breadth of required tasks [74], providing sufficient autonomy [75], feedback and social support from colleagues [50], developmental coaching (leadership and communication style) [70].

In sum, the interventions for teacher well-being can be grouped into two categories, as shown in the Table 3. Individual level interventions focus on improving teachers' competences through training or coaching programmes, while organizational level interventions focus on providing abundant supportive resources. So far, the most important intervening method is training programs for teachers. For example, participants who had participated mindfulness training programs reported better classroom organization and student behaviour management, which led to less time for dealing with behavioural issues [33].

Table 3: Interventions of teacher well-being.

	individual competences	organizational supports
interventions	meditation skills emotional regulation skills coping strategies connect well with students maintain good relationships with others class management skills mindfulness training	providing autonomy availability of resources minimizing time pressures narrowing the breadth of required tasks feedback and social support from colleagues developmental coaching



#### 4. Discussion

Teachers are facing great challenges in their daily work, such as high level of work stress, emotional exhaustion, and scarce support compared to other type of work. This review paper explored the theories, antecedents, outcomes and interventions of teacher well-being, which might help researchers to understand this research area more comprehensively.

The review studies show that there are four main theories models employed to analyze antecedents and outcomes of teacher well-being. They are Job Demands–Resources Model, Self-Determination Theory, Broaden and Build Theory, Theory of Changes. Demands–Resources Model was exerted to explore work -related factors of teacher well-being in the workplace setting, which can help identify organizational factors that could be improved [29]. Self-Determination Theory was applied to explore whether psychological needs (satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs) of teachers are satisfied or not and its influences. Teachers who have a high level of autonomy satisfaction and competence satisfaction reported high self-efficacy and job satisfaction [31]. This finding suggests that identifying teachers' needs is a prerequisite for improving their well-being. However, the needs of teachers may be different, which necessarily might be challenges for school administrators. Broaden-and-Build Theory put forward by Barbara Fredrickson illustrates the mechanism of positive emotions for the upward development of individuals within the emerging field of positive psychology [76]. According to Barbara Fredrickson, experiences of positive emotions broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires, which in turn serves to build their enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources. Greenier, V who applied the Broaden-and-Build Theory showed that emotion regulation and well-being notably predicted work engagement for British and Iranian teachers [32]. Finally, when comes to training or interventions, Theory of Changes explained that teacher programmes enhance teacher well-being by developing teacher competence and skills like emotion regulation and self-compassion, which then generate positive impacts on classroom organization and classroom emotional support [33]. Through the analysis of the theoretical model of teacher well-being, this paper identified four key elements in this research area: demands, resources, satisfaction and emotion, and divided four elements into two aspects: working conditions (demands, resources,) and personal competences (satisfaction and emotion).

This review revealed that personal and organizational antecedents have positive or negative influences on teacher well-being. From an educator's perspective, teacher competencies are crucial factors in enhancing teacher well-being, with a special emphasis on emotional regulation and student behavior management skills. This finding underscores the importance of ongoing professional development, training, and coaching programs for in-service teachers. Moreover, organizational work conditions have a significant impact on teacher well-being, with high work demands, job ambiguity, and increased time spent on distance learning potentially contributing to negative outcomes.

Conversely, teaching autonomy, ample resources, a stable work environment, and strong connections with colleagues and leaders can positively influence teacher well-being. Therefore, it is essential for educational organizations to provide sufficient resources and support to mitigate the adverse effects of challenging work conditions and to offer training programs that equip teachers with effective strategies for managing disruptive student behavior.

This review paper showed that teachers with high levels well-being can improve teacher professional developments [55], students academic success and mental health [61], and create a supportive learning atmosphere and environments [62]. These positive effects once again confirm the necessity and importance of improving teachers' well-being. “Teachers who enjoy high levels of well-being are likely to be successful teachers, more engaged with their language teaching practice, and better able to face challenges that occur along the way.” [58] Teachers are the fundamental force for

school improvement. This finding highlights that an crucial contributor to providing social-emotional and positive mental health resources to students is teacher well-being [1].

The review findings suggest that systematic support for improving teacher well-being is critical and important. Whether at the individual or organizational level, the essence of intervention is to provide teachers with professional development training and continuous learning opportunities. Training programmes that can help teacher to learn skills including reappraisal strategy, emotion regulating, interpersonal strategies with students, coping strategies, workload and stress managing, redesigned strategies, and handling of digital tools were especially required [10]. Compared with the mainstream training that focuses on teaching ability, psychological ability, class management ability, emotional regulation ability, coping ability, interpersonal ability and work-life balance ability have become more important and beneficial to teachers, which can better help them cope with the challenges of Managerialism prevailing in the 21st century.

#### **4.1. Implications for practice**

This review shows that the teaching profession is facing great work pressure and challenge. The implications for teaching practise are that systematic and strengthening of organizational support is necessary and significant. For pre-service teachers who focus on learning theoretical teaching knowledge, courses related to emotional regulation ability, teacher-student relationship building ability and stress management ability should be included in their pre-service learning scope. For in-serving teachers, professional workshops, intervention and training programmes could be used to enhance teaching skills, socioemotional competence , well-being and mental health of teachers.

#### **4.2. Future research considerations**

Future research should particularly focus on the theoretical construct of teacher well-being, which could help people understanding well-being better and more comprehensively. This means that researchers could use more qualitative or mixed research methods to delve deeper into the nature of teacher well-being. On the other hand, this review found that the perspective of psychological theory has occupied the mainstream of teacher well-being research, and the use of measurement tools to explore the antecedents and outcomes of teacher well-being has become a common research logic. Future studies can explore the institutional and structural factors of teachers well-being from the perspective of sociological theory. For example, narrative research methods can be used to describe in depth the causes of teachers' happiness or unhappiness, showing how these factors are intertwined with social institutions and political decisions. Such research could go beyond the perspective of individual teachers or school organizations to see the impact of macro institutional factors on individuals and organizations.

#### **4.3. Strengths and limitations**

Despite the effort to search the literature as much as possible, there is still the possibility of overlooking some studies because the review was limited to only papers published in English. However, strengths of this review contain an expanding and greater understanding of teacher well-being and identified knowledge gaps in theoretical basis, training and supporting strategies needed for teaching management in 21 century classroom and maintaining teacher well-being.

### **5. Conclusions**

The literature review explored various aspects of teacher well-being, including relevant theories, antecedents, outcomes, and interventions. The findings emphasized the emotionally demanding



nature of the teaching profession and its association with high levels of stress and burnout, which can adversely affect both teachers and their students. While student well-being has garnered significant attention in global politics and educational discourse, it is crucial to prioritize teacher well-being as well. Acknowledging the significant impact that teacher well-being has on the overall quality of education, it is imperative to develop targeted interventions and supportive policies to promote the mental health and emotional resilience of educators in academic settings.

In addition to the psychological perspective, the study of teacher well-being based on sociological theory may help people explore the organizational and institutional factors related to teacher well-being. Effective class management, emotional regulation and collective support from colleagues and schools are of great help to teachers. Administrators within schools can support teacher well-being by providing teaching autonomy, intervention programs, and sufficient job resources. Support from university departments where researchers provide more efficient and systematic intervention programs by keeping close collaboration with teachers is also vitally important to teacher well-being. In conclusion, this review demonstrates that teacher well-being is influenced by many factors including teacher personality, work-related stress, teacher-students relationship and school environments. Teacher well-being could have impacts on many aspects of teachers themselves, students and school cultures. An effective strategy for enhancing teacher well-being is building a support network that integrates teachers themselves, colleagues, school administrators and university institutions.

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