

## Teacher Health and Well-Being Paradigm

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### Abstract

This article describes the dimensions of teachers' well-being and the multilevel perspectives of teaching as the levels of institutional design satisfaction, institutional commitment, school climate, school engagement, emotional exhaustion etc. Also, it examines the school context that embraces leadership style, management team, and school communication system that are pivotal in decreasing extreme tiredness and enhancing job contentment. There have been established moderating factors that influence the relationship between the students' engagement and academic performance.

**Keywords:** teachers' well-being, job satisfaction, school context, mentally healthy teachers, connectedness

### Introduction

Teaching is a process that consists of delivering content to students through different didactic methods and strategies. Teaching involves constructing learning environments adapted to learners' needs to encourage critical thinking, develop practical skills, and enhance higher-order thinking skills through inclusive teaching practices. To support learning and effective and safe learning environments there is a need to guide students in their collaborative projects through communication and active interactions. Teaching is the set of operations of providing guidance, facilitation, supervision, mentorship, and feedback to help students navigate their learning journey. Last but not least, teaching fosters motivation, enthusiasm, and love for learning (Collie, Martin, 2017).

Studying the teachers' mental health is a priority nowadays as it directly impacts the quality of instruction, physical and affective school contexts, and community-school partnerships. This is why is crucial to identify the resources, incentives, factors, components, and dimensions of the teachers' well-being paradigm to ensure effective lesson design, classroom management, job satisfaction, creativity, innovation, and school culture.

The Job Demands-Resources Theory (JD-R) elaborated by Bakker & Demerouti, which relies on job demands and resources, explains the conceptual framework of teachers' well-being, motivation and performance (Bakker, Demerouti, 2001). According to JD-R, teaching job demands consist of teacher-student relationships and teacher-teacher interactions. Teaching job resources consist of personal and professional development. When job demands, set by the institution, are too high, it can develop teachers' mental health impairment, when the educational

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resources are limited, it demotivates the teachers and decreases the teachers' performance (Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, 2018). These things can be ameliorated with the help of leadership interventions and continuous tailored support administrative strategies.

According to the Self-Determination Theory developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, motivation can be intrinsic and extrinsic. The teachers' intrinsic motivation is generated through the activities organized for the sake of personal satisfaction, and is fostered by the following needs (Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, 2001):

1. Autonomy – the need to function as an independent unit;
2. Competence – the need to develop professionally, to upskill the teaching abilities;
3. Relatedness- the need to be a part of a community.

Extrinsic motivation of teachers consists of (Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, 2001):

- External Regulation: teachers' conduct is adjusted by external stimuli and rewards.
- Introjected Regulation: teachers' conduct is adjusted by internal constraints, e.g. obligation.
- Identified Regulation: teachers' conduct is adjusted by a personal set of values.
- Integrated Regulation: teachers' conduct is regulated by one's sense of self, and teaching identity in the educational community.

The Self-Determination Theory works as a good orchestration of teaching environments; if the environments boost autonomy, competence, and relatedness then it will lead to increased intrinsic motivation and teachers' well-being, and vice versa, if the environments do not focus on autonomy, competence, and relatedness, then teachers are subjected to low intrinsic motivation and suffer from mental health disorders. So, it is outrageous to enhance teachers' motivation and job satisfaction by creating teaching contexts that foster these basic psychological needs.

To extend the Job Demands-Resources Theory when establishing the dimensions of teachers' well-being (Bakker, Demerouti, 2018), the multilevel perspectives of teaching as the levels of institutional design (how the school functions and operates), teachers' levels of functioning, and group work designs should be considered. Group work enhances the teachers' efficiency and performance, more than that, group performance will be higher than individual performance only when all group members are motivated to achieve the institutional goals, being facilitated by education administration management strategies (Strangor, 2012).

According to the Regulatory Focus Theory (Higgins, 2002) the teachers' regulatory mechanism depends on the teachers' *must self* and *ideal self*. The *must self* is built on professional responsibilities, and the *ideal self* is built on career development goals through desires and ambitions. Teachers, who are interested in career advancement are looking for innovations in their teaching practices, teachers, who bring their contribution through the "must do" daily teaching routine, are sensitive to punishments, ambiguous in the process of change, and perform emotional instability (Kark, Dijk Van, 2007).

Maintaining a balance between institutional commands and resources is pivotal for teachers' prosperity. Institutional and individual resources boost teachers' motivation and contribute to further interactions with other members of the educational process.

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## **The Structure of Teachers' Well-Being**

Frenzel et al. consider that teachers' well-being is made up of two dimensions:

1. Positive dimension: job satisfaction, institutional commitment, school engagement;
2. Negative dimension: emotional exhaustion, stress, depression, and burnout (Frenzel et al., 2021).

Job satisfaction derives from the teachers' school contexts, teaching autonomy, administrative recognition and appreciation, and professional and personal development. It includes emotional status as well as feelings of being valued and accomplished, and feelings about one's own abilities and talents (Frenzel et al., 2021).

Institutional commitment is a part of an effective school context made up of affective connection with the institution, alignment with the school philosophy, trustworthiness in school initiatives, stability with the management team, boosting institutional reputation, building mentorship and advisory networks leading to school development. School engagement is about adjustment to the behavioural patterns at the working sites to accomplish the institutional objectives.

The negative dimension can lead to less effort put in designing lesson plans, withdrawing from classes, absenteeism, less effort and interest in teaching, less effort in investment in innovation of the educational practices, less interest in the students' learning paths, classroom management, etc.

It is crucial to define emotional exhaustion that is the decrease in emotional status as a result of the amalgam of the incentives from the educational backgrounds and job stress (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011). Emotional exhaustion, also, can be defined as having low psychological health (Colie, 2018).

Collie and Martin analysed the following dimensions of the teachers' well-being (Collie, Martin, 2017):

- ✓ Teachers' adaptability and autonomy support;
- ✓ Teachers' psychological functioning;
- ✓ Students' numeracy achievement;
- ✓ Interaction with autonomy support.

A positive correlation was noticed between teachers' sense of adaptability and the perceived support for autonomy, that is, when teachers feel autonomy in having a sense of authority and sovereignty in their daily instruction; they can easily adapt to the new demands, confrontations, and inclusive needs of students. Teachers who adapt to new educational scenarios are psychologically balanced, can cope with stress-managing tools and have higher job satisfaction. Also, teachers who can easily adapt identify the adequate didactic method to fit the inclusive needs of students and to improve students' achievement (Collie, Martin, 2017).

Granziera, Martin, and Collie examined the emotional exhaustion and behavioural engagement of teachers, that is, school-average teacher well-being in relation to school-average student achievement that is literacy and numeracy (Colie et al, 2016). The results were shocking

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as the schools with higher teachers' emotional exhaustion were lower in students' achievements. According to Granziera, Martin, and Collie, teachers' well-being is directly related to students' achievements, results, and outcomes and depends on the didactic activity the teachers perform in the schools (Collie et al, 2016).

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) examined the teachers' feelings of belonging, emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and motivation, and the findings of this research were categorized into the following dimensions: job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, school context, and feeling of belonging.

The teachers' job satisfaction is shaped by the school context, the feeling of belonging, the positive school environment based on the supportive leadership style and the collaborative school philosophy.

Emotional exhaustion derives from teachers' motivation to leave the profession. Teachers with high levels of emotional exhaustion come from schools with high job demands that lack resources, they are prone to leave teaching as they develop lower job satisfaction. The school context encompasses leadership style, management team, and communication system, all of which are pivotal in reducing extreme tiredness and enhancing job satisfaction

Finally, the sense of belonging is a compulsory ingredient in this formula to increase professional fulfilment.

### **School Contexts within the Teachers' Well-Being**

Another area of research was to examine the school environments through the prism of the following variables: value consonance, supervisory support, relations with colleagues, relations with parents, time pressure, discipline problems, teachers' belongingness, emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and motivation to leave the teaching profession. These school context variables were related to job satisfaction and motivation to leave the teaching profession (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011).

Klassen, Yerdelen, and Durksen (2013) elaborated the Engaged Teachers Scale to measure the teacher engagement that consists of cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement, and physical engagement.

- ✓ Cognitive Engagement is logical, abstract, mental operations and strategic thinking that deal with lesson design, long-term planning, establishing the educational strategy for different learning environments, class management decisions etc.
- ✓ Emotional Engagement is attributing to instructional activity the psychological roles, and interactive patterns with all members in the educational community embraced in a varied spectrum of feelings of passion, zeal, fury, rage, fulfilment, contentment, pride, relief, vindication (Frenzel, Daniels, & Burić, 2021).
- ✓ Social engagement is the system of relationships built within the learning community based on cooperation, collaboration, and false communication.
- ✓ Physical engagement is vivacity, liveliness and pains taken by teachers (Yerdelen, S., & Durksen, 2013).

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Frenzel, Daniels, and Burić (2021) explain that teachers' emotions directly impact students' learning journeys, motivation, and academic accomplishments. Positive emotions generate high student performance and vice versa. Frenzel, Daniels, and Burić (2021) introduce the concept of student emotional contagion, that is, imitating the teachers' emotional states (the teacher's passion generates students' active participation in the didactic activity).

Grayson and Alvarez (2008) state that the school climate, that is school maintenance, is the teachers' interactions with parents and students, management team, that can impact the teachers' mental health leading to burnout. González-Morales, Peiró, Rodríguez, and Bliese (2012) reveal that the perceived collective burnout is caused by individual-level factors (teachers' features, interpretation of job tasks) and group-level factors (teachers working in groups, school management strategies).

The Mediator Model constructed by Grayson and Alvarez (2008) stresses the importance of administrative support, assertive teachers' relationships, institutional expectations, and classroom management strategies adopted by the educational institution on the mental health of teachers.

### **Teacher Connectedness within the Teachers' Well-Being**

García-Moya, Brooks, and Spencer (2018) reveal the concept of teacher connectedness that measures the quality of the relationship built between the students and their educators and is formed of:

- ✓ structural factors such as school size, resources, rules, policies, and
- ✓ relational factors- the interpersonal intelligence.

These structural and relational factors of connectedness directly influence the teachers' professional prosperity and sense of achievement.

Lei, Cui, and Zhou (2018) elicit the interconnectedness between student engagement and academic achievement. This research stresses the dimensions of student engagement that are the following:

- ✓ behavioural - students' taking part in curricular and extracurricular activities,
- ✓ emotional – students' affective responses, and
- ✓ cognitive engagement - students' mental effort employed purposefully in the realization of tasks.

The student's cognitive engagement has in its turn the greatest impact on their academic achievement.

There have been established moderating factors that influence the relationship between students' engagement and academic performance such as:

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- ✓ Grade Level – the higher the grade the stronger the relationship between engagement and achievement;
- ✓ Cultural Context – The cultural heritage of a country can impact students’ engagement;
- ✓ Measurement Methods – the interrelation between students’ engagement and academic prosperity depends on the way how it was calculated (Lei, Cui, Zhou, 2018).

The measurement methods used in the classroom setting reflect the positive correlation between students’ engagement and academic proficiency that are:

1. Self-reported measures are done when the students are asked to self-declare or conduct a self-analysis through surveys, questionnaires, and reflections on:
  - their levels of engagement ranking their educational purpose, permeability, academic striving, sentimental feedback, OR
  - their academic success by meditating on their own qualitative and quantitative qualifications, proficiency or academic results.
2. Teacher-reported measures are conducted by teachers and focus on students’ interactions by measuring their involvement in activities and academic performance using different evaluation instruments (Lei, Cui, Zhou, 2018).

### 3. Conclusions

Teacher well-being can be defined as follows (see Table 1):

Table 1. Teachers’ Well- Being Paradigm

Scholars	Teachers’ Well-being paradigm
Frenzel, Daniels, and Burić, 2021	Relation between teachers' emotions, effectiveness in the classroom, classroom environment, and professional development.
Collie Martin, 2017	Teachers' Adaptability and Autonomy Support; Psychological Functioning, Students' Numeracy Achievement, and Classroom Interaction through the Autonomy Support.
Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011	Job Satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, school context, feeling of belonging.
Klassen, Yerdelen, and Durksen, 2013	Teachers’ engagement consists of cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement, and physical engagement
Grayson and Alvarez, 2008	School climate
García-Moya, Brooks, and Spencer, 2018	Teacher connectedness
González-Morales, Peiró, Rodríguez, and Bliese, 2012	Healthy and supportive school environments

Mentally healthy teachers perform their roles confidently and easily. They are good designers, organizers of knowledge, managers of their classrooms, leaders, generators of emotional and academic support to their students, and motivators of individual and overall success.

Emotionally stable teachers are professionally autonomous, recognized and appreciated by the administration, and have higher job satisfaction. This provides stability in the educational environment and leads to lower absenteeism. This consistency promotes uninterrupted learning and continuity. Mentally well-balanced teachers pursue ongoing professional development to

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invest in the future of the institution with the help of innovative teaching practices. Emotionally healthy teachers collaborate easily with the teaching staff, parents, and the community, providing support for both the school and the community.

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