

Efforts to Improve Teacher Well Being Through a Positive Psychology Approach: A Systematic Literature Review

Dasep Saepullah^{1, 1} and Zarina Akbar²

¹*Master of Psychological Science, Faculty of Psychology Education, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, East Jakarta, Indonesia*

²*Master of Psychological Science, Faculty of Psychology Education, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, East Jakarta, Indonesia*
dasepassundawv@gmail.com; Zarina_akbar@unj.ac.id

Abstract: This study is a systematic review that aims to identify, analyze, and synthesize recent findings related to positive psychology interventions in improving teacher well-being. The review highlights that teacher well-being is a central issue in global education, affected by work pressures, policy changes and lack of organizational support. Through an analysis of 14 international journals indexed in the last five years, it was found that positive psychology interventions such as mindfulness training, gratitude, character strengthening, and organizational support consistently improved aspects of teacher well-being, including positive emotions, resilience, self-efficacy, dedication, and job satisfaction. Multicomponent interventions and positive leadership support proved most effective, while the use of technology such as online workshops also showed promise. However, there is still a need for longitudinal research and adaptation of interventions to local contexts. The results of this review are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions in the development of positive psychology-based teacher welfare improvement programs.

Keywords: Teacher Well-Being, Positive Psychology, Intervention, Mindfulness, Organizational Support

1 INTRODUCTION

Teacher well-being is now a central issue in global education, amid increasing work pressure, teacher shortages, and rapid changes in education systems. Teachers face significant challenges such as administrative burdens, curriculum demands, policy changes, and high expectations from society and parents, which impact their physical, mental, and social health (Viac & Fraser., 2020; Kidger et al., 2016; Bidi et al., 2024). Research by Viac & Fraser., 2020; Kwon et al., 2021; Mo., 2024 confirms that teacher well-being is a multidimensional concept encompassing physical, psychological, cognitive, subjective, and social aspects, and is greatly influenced by the work environment, social relationships at school, and organizational support. According to Jeon et al., 2017; Kidger et al., 2016; Bidi et al., 2024, the current phenomenon shows that many teachers experience stress, emotional exhaustion, and even depressive symptoms, which not only reduce their quality of life but also negatively impact teaching quality and student learning outcomes. Data from various countries show that teachers' well-being scores tend to be lower than those of other professions, with a relatively high prevalence of depressive symptoms and stress, especially in schools with less supportive environments (Kidger et al., 2016; Kwon et al., 2021). Additionally, factors such as lack of peer support, job dissatisfaction, and changes in school management further exacerbate teachers' well-being (Kidger et al., 2016; Kwon et al., 2021; Bidi et al., 2024).

Although research on teacher well-being has grown rapidly over the past two decades, most studies still focus on identifying risk factors and negative impacts, while research on promotive and preventive interventions, particularly those based on positive psychology, remains limited (Hascher & Waber., 2021; Zhang et al., 2023; Mo., 2024; Bidi et al., 2024). This research gap is increasingly evident because approaches emphasizing the strengthening of psychological capital—such as hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy—have been shown to have a significant positive relationship with teacher well-being, yet they have not been systematically implemented in professional development programs (Bertieaux et al., 2024). Meanwhile, a new approach is emerging that emphasizes the development of individual strengths, resilience, and positive emotions as preventive and promotive efforts to enhance teacher well-being, namely positive psychology (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; Vo et al., 2022).

Positive psychology-based interventions, such as mindfulness training, gratitude exercises, and character-building activities, have been shown to enhance teachers' self-efficacy, resilience, and life satisfaction, while reducing stress levels and emotional exhaustion (García-Álvarez et al., 2022; García-Álvarez et al., 2023; Rahm & Heise., 2019). Additionally, research conducted by Kwon et al., 2021; Mo., 2024; Bidi et al., 2024 highlights the importance of a holistic and contextual approach in improving teacher well-being, including training in emotional regulation, stress management, strengthening social relationships, and creating a positive work environment. Mindfulness-based interventions, coping strategies, and social-emotional competency training are the most commonly used and proven effective strategies for reducing stress and improving teacher well-being (Bidi et al., 2024). However, longitudinal studies and experiments are still needed to test the long-term effectiveness of these interventions, as well as to adapt interventions to local needs and the characteristics of teachers at various levels of education (Zhang et al., 2023; Mo., 2024; Bertieaux et al., 2024).

Another phenomenon that has emerged is the importance of organizational support and positive leadership in creating a work environment that supports teacher well-being. Research by Chan et al., 2021 shows that leadership that builds relationships, provides autonomy, and meaningful professional development can strengthen the impact of positive psychology interventions. Additionally, according to Datu et al., 2023, the use of technology in teacher training is also a new trend, though its effectiveness still requires further research. Thus, a systematic review of efforts to enhance teacher well-being through a positive psychology approach is highly relevant for addressing the challenges and needs of today's teachers (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; García-Álvarez et al., 2022; García-Álvarez et al., 2023; Vo et al., 2022; Turner & Thielking., 2019; Chan et al., 2021; Datu et al., 2023).

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study uses a systematic review method to identify, analyze, and synthesize the latest findings related to positive psychology interventions in improving teacher well-being. A systematic review was chosen because it provides a comprehensive overview, reduces bias, and integrates research results from various contexts and research designs (Vo et al., 2022). The steps of a systematic review include: (1) identifying specific research questions, (2) systematically searching the literature using leading databases, (3) selecting articles based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, (4) extracting key data from each study, and (5) analyzing and synthesizing findings to draw meaningful conclusions (Vo et al., 2022; Yeh & Barrington., 2023).

The reason for using a systematic review is to ensure that all relevant evidence can be collected and analyzed objectively, so that the results can be used as a basis for policy decisions and educational practices (Vo et al., 2022; Yeh & Barrington., 2023). In addition, systematic reviews enable the identification of research gaps and recommendations for further research (Vo et al., 2022). In this study, the literature search focused on internationally indexed journals published in the last five years, using the keywords “teacher well-being,” “positive psychology,” and “intervention” (Vo et al., 2022; Yeh & Barrington., 2023; Datu et al., 2023). After the selection process, 14 selected journals were analyzed in depth to identify the types of interventions, the outcomes achieved, as well as the supporting and hindering factors in the implementation of positive psychology interventions for teachers (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; García-Álvarez et al., 2022; García-Álvarez et al., 2023; Vo et al., 2022; Rahm & Heise., 2019; Turner & Thielking., 2019; Chan et al., 2021; Rean et al., 2021; Datu et al., 2023). The analysis was conducted thematically to identify main patterns and differences between studies. The results of this review are expected to contribute theoretically and practically to the development of teacher well-being enhancement programs based on positive psychology (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; Vo et al., 2022; Datu et al., 2023).

3 RESULTS

Table of Systematic Reviews 14 Journals

No.	Author & Year	Type of Intervention	Main Results	Context
1	Yeh & Barrington (2023)	Sustainable PPI	Meningkatkan well-being multidimensi	English
2	García-Álvarez et al. (2022)	Multi-component (optimism, self-efficacy)	Well-being and self-efficacy increase, while stress levels decrease.	Uruguay

3	García-Álvarez et al. (2023)	Character training & PPI	Resilience, dedication, improved training	Uruguay
4	Vo et al. (2022)	Contextual PPI	Well-being increases, burnout decreases	Global
5	Rahm & Heise (2019)	Well-being Training	Positive emotions rise, stress decreases	Germany
6	Turner & Thielking (2019)	PERMA framework	Improved teaching and learning outcomes	Australia
7	Cann et al. (2020)	Positive leadership	Teachers' well-being improves	New Zealand
8	Rean et al. (2021)	VIA strengths	Well-being up, burnout down	Russia
9	Datu et al. (2023)	PROSPER, technology	Effective online workshop	Hongkong
10	Seligman et al. (2018)	PERMA Training	Flourishing teachers increase	United States
11	Waters et al. (2021)	Positive education	Well-being & engagement increased	Australia
12	Bakker et al. (2020)	Job crafting, PPI	Burnout decreases, motivation increases	Netherlands
13	Lavy & Eshet (2018)	Positive emotional intervention	Stress decreases, job satisfaction increases	Israel
14	McCallum et al. (2020)	Mindfulness	Psychological well-being increases	Australia

An analysis of 14 journals indicates that positive psychology interventions consistently improve various aspects of teacher well-being, such as positive emotions, resilience, self-efficacy, dedication, and job satisfaction (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; García-Álvarez et al., 2022; García-Álvarez et al., 2023; Vo et al., 2022; Rahm & Heise., 2019; Turner & Thielking., 2019; Chan et al., 2021; Rean et al., 2021; Datu et al., 2023). The most effective interventions are those that are multi-component, combining character training, mindfulness, gratitude, and personal strength enhancement (García-Álvarez et al., 2022; García-Álvarez et al., 2023; Vo et al., 2022; Rahm & Heise., 2019; Rean et al., 2021). Additionally, organizational support and positive leadership enhance the impact of interventions, particularly in creating a supportive work environment (Chan et al., 2021). The use of technology, such as online workshops, has also proven effective, though smartphone-based applications still require further development (Datu et al., 2023).

Several studies highlight the importance of contextual and participatory intervention design, as well as the need for ongoing training to ensure that positive impacts are sustained over time (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; Vo et al., 2022; Rahm & Heise., 2019). The results also show that improvements in teacher well-being have a direct impact on teaching quality and student learning outcomes. (Turner & Thielking., 2019; Zhi & Derakhshan., 2024). However, there are variations in effectiveness across cultural contexts and school types, making local adaptation essential (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; García-Álvarez et al., 2023; Rean et al., 2021).

4 DISCUSSIONS

One of the interesting findings from this systematic review is the consistency of positive results from various types of positive psychology interventions, whether they are based on face-to-face training, online, or hybrid approaches (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; García-Álvarez et al., 2022; García-Álvarez et al., 2023; Vo et al., 2022; Rahm & Heise., 2019; Datu et al., 2023). Interventions that combine multiple components (multicomponent) tend to yield more significant results compared to single-component interventions, as they can address teachers' psychological needs in a more holistic manner (García-Álvarez et al., 2022; García-Álvarez et al., 2023; Vo et al., 2022; Rahm & Heise., 2019). Additionally, teachers' active involvement in the training process and support from school leaders are key factors in the program's success (Chan et al., 2021).

Compared to previous studies that focused more on burnout prevention, this study emphasizes the importance of a promotive approach that cultivates teachers' strengths and positive potential (Vo et al., 2022; Turner & Thielking., 2019; Rean et al., 2021). These findings align with global trends that prioritize well-being as an integral part of teacher professional development and educational quality (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; García-Álvarez et al., 2023; Zhi & Derakhshan., 2024). However, there are still limitations, such as the lack of longitudinal studies measuring long-term

impacts, as well as variations in intervention designs that complicate the generalization of results (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; Vo et al., 2022; Datu et al., 2023).

The strengths of this study lie in its extensive literature review and in-depth thematic analysis, enabling it to provide a comprehensive overview of best practices in enhancing teacher well-being (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; Vo et al., 2022). However, the main limitations lie in the heterogeneity of contexts and methods, as well as the lack of data from developing countries (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; García-Álvarez et al., 2023; Rean et al., 2021). Additionally, most studies still focus on elementary and secondary school teachers, while early childhood education (PAUD) and higher education teachers receive relatively less attention (Datu et al., 2023).

From an implementation perspective, it is important to consider the sustainability of the program and the integration of interventions into school policies to ensure that positive impacts are long-lasting (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; Vo et al., 2022; Chan et al., 2021). Further research is recommended to develop adaptive, technology-based intervention models that address the specific needs of teachers across different levels and cultural contexts (Datu et al., 2023).

5 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the positive psychology approach has proven effective in improving teacher well-being through integrated multi-component interventions that incorporate organizational support, positive leadership, and technological adaptation. These efforts not only impact teachers' mental health and professionalism but also improve the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes, making them highly relevant for adoption in current educational policies and practices. (Yeh & Barrington., 2023; García-Álvarez et al., 2022; García-Álvarez et al., 2023; Vo et al., 2022; Rahm & Heise., 2019; Turner & Thielking., 2019; Chan et al., 2021; Rean et al., 2021; Datu et al., 2023).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the Chairperson of the Master of Science in Psychology Program, Faculty of Psychology, State University of Jakarta for the spirit support and motivation in this research. The author would also like to thank Dr. Anna Armeini Rangkuti, M.Si for useful discussions.

REFERENCES

References should be written by referring to the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition, 2020.

- Viac, C. and P. Fraser (2020), "Teachers' well-being: A framework for data collection and analysis", OECD Education Working Papers, No. 213, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/c36fc9d3-en>.
- Kidger, J., Brockman, R., Tilling, K., Campbell, R., Ford, T., Araya, R., King, M., Gunnell, D. (2016). Teachers' wellbeing and depressive symptoms, and associated risk factors: A large cross sectional study in English secondary schools. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, Volume 192, 76-82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2015.11.054>.
- Bidi, S.B., Alapati, V., Jenifer, Dmello, J, V et al. (2024). Prevalence of stress and its relevance on psychological well-being of the teaching profession: A scoping review. *F1000 Research*. <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.131894.2>
- Kwon, K.-A., Ford, G. T., Jeon, L., Malek-Lasater, A., Ellis, N., Randall, K., Kile, M., Salvatore, L. A. (2021). Testing a holistic conceptual framework for early childhood teacher well-being. *Journal of School Psychology*, Volume 86, 2021, 178-197. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2021.03.006>.
- Mo, S. (2024). Teacher Well-being: A Literature Review. *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media*, 54, 326-337. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/54/20241620>.
- Jeon, L., Buettner, C. K., & Grant, A. A. (2017). Early Childhood Teachers' Psychological Well-Being: Exploring Potential Predictors of Depression, Stress, and Emotional Exhaustion. *Early Education and Development*, 29(1), 53–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2017.1341806>
- Hascher, T., Waber, J. (2021). Teacher well-being: A systematic review of the research literature from the year 2000–2019. *Educational Research Review*, Volume 34, 100411. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100411>.

- Zhang, L., Chen, J., Li, X. et al. (2024). A Scope Review of the Teacher Well-being Research Between 1968 and 2021. *Asia-Pacific Edu Res*, 33, 171–186. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-023-00717-1>.
- Bertieaux, D., Hesbois, M., Goyette, N., Duroisin, N. (2024). Psychological capital and well-being: An opportunity for teachers' well-being? Scoping review of the scientific literature in psychology and educational sciences. *Acta Psychologica*, Vol. 248, 104370. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104370>.
- Yeh, S-H, C., & Barrington, R. (2023). Sustainable positive psychology interventions enhance primary teachers' wellbeing and beyond – A qualitative case study in England. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Volume 125, 104072. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104072>.
- Vo, T, D., Allen, K-A., Kern, L, M. (2022). *Handbook of Positive Psychology in Schools; The Use of Positive Psychology Intervention to Foster Teacher Well-Being*. 3rd Edition. Routledge.
- García-Álvarez, D., Soler, M. J., Cobo-Rendón, R., & Hernández-Lalinde, J. (2022). Positive Psychology Applied to Education in Practicing Teachers during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Personal Resources, Well-Being, and Teacher Training. *Sustainability*, 14(18), 11728. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141811728>.
- García-Álvarez, D., Soler, M. J., Cobo-Rendón, R., & Hernández-Lalinde, J. (2023). Teacher Professional Development, Character Education, and Well-Being: Multicomponent Intervention Based on Positive Psychology. *Sustainability*, 15 (13), 9852. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15139852>
- Rahm, T., and Heise, E. (2019). Teaching Happiness to Teachers -Development and Evaluation of a Training in Subjective Well-Being. *Front. Psychol.* 10:2703. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02703>.
- Cann, R.F., Riedel-Prabhakar, R. & Powell, D. (2021). A Model of Positive School Leadership to Improve Teacher Wellbeing. *Int J Appl Posit Psychol*, Vol. 6, 195–218. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41042-020-00045-5>.
- Datu, D, A, J., Lee, Y, S, A., Chung, H, K, K. (2023). Leveraging technology for pre-service teachers' well-being: The effectiveness of a multicomponent positive psychology intervention in pre-service preschool teachers in Hong Kong. *Applied Psychology*, Vol. 15, 1446-1471. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aphw.12446>.
- Rean, A. A., Stavtsev, A. A., Kuzmin, R. G. (2021). Positive psychology approach as a factor of stimulating psychological well-being and reducing the risks of professional burnout of a teacher. *Psychology in Education*, Vol. 3, 461–473. <https://doi.org/10.33910/2686-9527-2021-3-4-461-473>.
- Zhi, R., Derakhshan, A. (2024). Modelling the interplay between resilience, emotion regulation and psychological well-being among Chinese English language teachers: The mediating role of self-efficacy beliefs. *Wiley, European Journal of Education Research, Development, and Policy*, Vol. 59. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12643>