

Demographic Variables and Psychological Well-being of Teachers

PAPIA SARAF* AND C.G. VENKATESH MURTHY**

ABSTRACT

A teacher's psychological well-being impacts not only their teaching effectiveness but has far reaching effects on both the psychological well-being and achievement of the students. Even though teaching is now recognised as a stressful job causing burnout, understanding and promoting teacher psychological well-being remains a neglected area. Recognising that psychological well-being is a human characteristic not necessarily induced by the work context, this paper intended to understand the demographic variables that may have an impact on the psychological well-being of a teacher. These demographic variables included gender, marital status, years of work experience and college affiliations. To this end the psychological well-being of undergraduate degree college and higher secondary teachers were assessed using the psychological well-being PWB 20 scale (Mehrotra, Tripathi, and Ban, 2013). The sample consisted of 945 teachers (622 professional degree college teachers, 198 academic degree college teachers and 125 higher secondary teachers). The results indicated that the professional degree college teachers had significantly better psychological well-being levels than both academic degree college and higher secondary teachers. Demographic variables, such as gender and marital status did not impacted psychological well-being. However, years of experience did have a differential impact on psychological well-being. The implications of the study are discussed in the paper.

Keywords: Teacher stress, Psychological Well-being, Demographic Variables

सार

एक शिक्षक की मनोवैज्ञानिक खुशहाली/कल्याण न केवल उसके शिक्षण को प्रभावित करती है, बल्कि उससे छात्रों के मनोवैज्ञानिक कल्याण और उपलब्धि दोनों प्रभावित होते हैं। यद्यपि

* Assistant Professor, Jain University, Bengaluru (e-mail: s.papia@jainuniversity.ac.in)

** Professor and Dean (Research), Regional Institute of Education, Mysuru (e-mail: venk_murthy2003@yahoo.co.in).

शिक्षण को अब एक तनावपूर्ण व्यवसाय की मान्यता दी जाती है, शिक्षक के मनोवैज्ञानिक हितों पर अपेक्षाकृत कम ध्यान दिया गया है। मनोवैज्ञानिक खुशहाली एक मानवीय विशेषता है जो जरूरी नहीं कि उसके कार्य से ही संबंधित हो। यह शोध पत्र उन जनसांख्यिकीय विशेषताओं पर प्रकाश डालता है जो एक शिक्षक के मनोवैज्ञानिक कल्याण/हितों पर प्रभाव डाल सकता है। इन जनसांख्यिकीय भिन्नताओं में लिंग, वैवाहिक स्थिति, कार्य अनुभव के वर्ष और कॉलेज संबद्धता शामिल हैं। इस अध्ययन में स्नातक महाविद्यालयों और उच्चतर माध्यमिक विद्यालयों के शिक्षकों के मनोवैज्ञानिक खुशहाली का आकलन एक परिक्षण (*Psychological Well-being 20 Scale* by मेहरोत्रा, त्रिपाठी एवं बन., 2013) द्वारा किया गया। अध्ययन में 945 शिक्षक (622 पेशेवर डिग्री कॉलेज शिक्षक, 198 शैक्षणिक डिग्री कॉलेज शिक्षक और 125 उच्चतर माध्यमिक शिक्षक) शामिल थे। अध्ययन से पता चलता है कि पेशेवर डिग्री कॉलेज के शिक्षकों में शैक्षणिक डिग्री कॉलेज और उच्चतर माध्यमिक शिक्षकों दोनों की तुलना में बेहतर मनोवैज्ञानिक खुशहाली थी। लिंग और वैवाहिक स्थिति जैसे जनसांख्यिकीय भिन्नता का मनोवैज्ञानिक कल्याण/हित पर प्रभाव नहीं पाया गया। शैक्षिक अनुभव का मनोवैज्ञानिक कल्याण/हित पर प्रभाव पाया गया।

Introduction

Psychological well-being (PWB), defines well-being in terms of self identity realisation and the degree to which an individual is fully functioning. PWB is concerned with an individual's judgement regarding their continual happiness, satisfaction with their physical and mental health and it relates to various psycho-social factors including life or work satisfaction (Huppert, 2009). The concept is related to self-actualisation and meaning rather than happiness and hedonism (Ryan and Deci, 2001) and involves life goals, actualisation of one's potential, quality of relationships, responsibility and autonomy (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). While psychological well-being is an important factor for all professions, its impact is felt more in professions where individuals are constantly interacting with various social systems within an organisation, such as in education.

Traditionally, teaching was considered a noble profession and teachers were held in high esteem in society. However, over the last couple of years, the realities of classroom management, the elevated expectation from both parents and management have made teaching a stressful job. Teachers need to not only revamp their teaching and student handling skills but also introduce more value added activities continually to stay relevant. Maslach et al., (2001) reported that teachers have the highest level of emotional exhaustion. Given this scenario, a teacher's psychological

well-being is a crucial factor in effectively coping with these work related stress factors.

Teachers have such a powerful influence on students, often surpassing that of parents, that their basic personalities and attitudes can either spark positivity or negativity in students. As Ginott (1975) in his book—*Teacher and Child* rightly observed that a teacher “possesses a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous” and “can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration”. Keeping in mind the immense impact a teacher’s psychological well-being has on students’ psychological well-being, the study aimed to assess the demographic correlates of psychological well-being in teachers.

Review of Literature

Previous research has conclusively established the stressful nature of a teacher’s job and the imperativeness to focus on the psychological well-being of teachers. There is a spurt of Indian studies on teacher burnout which reflect the growing concern for teacher psychological well-being (Dave and Majumdar, 2020; Rana and Soodan, 2019; Rajak and Chandra, 2017; Nath and Soni, 2017; Seth, 2016; Shukla and Trivedi 2008; Sahni and Deswal 2015; Bansal, 2014; Sharma, P 2014; Rahman, 2009; Dagar, 2016).

Teachers employed in various countries experience high levels of work-related stress (Akpochofo, 2012) and it was estimated that about 30 per cent of teachers left teaching profession due to stress. Teaching had the second highest work related stress outcome effecting physical health and psychological well-being among the 26 occupations studied (Johnson et al., 2005). A growing number of studies on mental health among teachers have stressed on non-functionality, stress levels, exhaustion, and fatigue (Fleming, Mackrain, and LeBuffe, 2013; Maslach and Leiter, 2008). High stress levels and burnout jeopardize not only the physical health of the teachers but also their notion of self-sufficiency and self-respect (Eatough, Way, and Chang, 2012). Moreover, high stress levels and exhaustion among teachers lead to feelings of dissatisfaction with their work resulting in decreased professional performance (Burke, Greenglass, and Schwarzer, 1996). This in turn leads to poor teacher–student relationship leading to lowered academic achievement of students (Fleming et al., 2013; Spilt, Koomen, and Thijs, 2011), and the general well-being of both students and teachers suffer (McGrath and Huntington, 2007). The high stress

level among teachers and the failure to cope negatively affected their levels of psychological well-being (Roffey, 2012; Vesely, Saklofske, and Nordstokke, 2014). Burned out educators were unable to deal effectively with the overpowering emotional stress of teaching (Brouwers and Tomic, 2000). Teachers, who despite relatively high level of stress and burnout persisted to teach, can have a negative influence on their students (Hock, 1988). These negative influences translated into poor quality teaching, unwillingness to accept and adjust to student needs and poor teacher-student interactions (Capel, 1991), low achievements of the students (Dworkin, 1985), high teacher absenteeism, turnover, career change, mental health, deteriorating performance and early retirement (Burke, Greenglass, and Schwarzer, 1996), low self-esteem and depressive symptoms (Schonfeld, 2001), resentment, anger and helplessness (Blasé, 1982), headache, frequent colds, flu, and cardiovascular symptoms (Hock, 1988, Schonfeld, 2001), were some of the harmful consequences of the chronically burned out teachers. Poor teacher well-being was found to be positively related with dissatisfaction and stress at work (Kidger et al. 2016).

On the other hand, studies on teacher functionality and mental health emphasised the need for positive affect and pro-social relationships for student-teacher, teacher-teacher, and teacher-administrator relationships (Gozzoli et al. 2015; Pas, Bradshaw and Hershfeldt, 2012; Van Horn, Taris, Schaufeli, and Schreurs, 2004). Teachers who have a positive cultural impression of their work environments and of their own profession have fewer mental health concerns (Bentea, 2015; Wong and Zhang, 2014).

Indian studies on psychological well-being of teachers are a recent phenomenon. Srimathi and Kumar (2010), in their study on *Psychological well-being of employed women across different organisation (such as industries, hospitals, banks, educational institutions and calling centers)* concluded that female teachers had the highest level of psychological well-being. A positive and significant correlation between occupational self-efficacy and psychological well-being has been found (Salimirad and Srimathi, 2016). Zahoor (2015) found significant difference in the psychological well-being and job satisfaction among government and private school teachers. While Mansuri (2017) studied the psychological profile of student-teachers in aided and non aided colleges of education. The results showed a flat profile across various sub scale measures and no significant difference in PWB levels between aided and non aided college's student teachers.

It was found that the PWB of teachers needed to be supported and nurtured in the educational setting. Research suggested that there was an important relationship between the PWB of teachers and the psycho-social work environment of a given school (Tang, Leka, and MacLennan, 2013). Some of the variables effecting the well-being of teachers were being highly motivated, having social needs met in the school environment, having sufficient didactic or technical skills and having positive relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators (Bentea, 2015; Gozzoli et al., 2015; Roffey, 2012). Also, a teacher's perception of sufficiency, level of satisfaction with their job, and whether or not students like the subject taught had a direct impact on teacher's well-being (Morgan, 2012). Self-concordant motivation for special work was another important factor in reducing the effects of high work demands on happiness at work for secondary school teachers (Tadic, Bakker and Oerlemans, 2013). Supervisor support for psychological need satisfaction had a large effect on autonomy satisfaction, a moderate effect on relatedness satisfaction, and a small effect on competence satisfaction (Fouche, 2015), effective teamwork was associated with lower levels of emotional exhaustion and higher levels of work satisfaction (Jacobsson, et al., 2016), level of support among colleagues and teachers' self-confidence enhanced psychological well-being levels (Wong and Zhang, 2014), teacher resilience was enhanced by specific actions that promoted positive feelings of belonging, respect, value and trust. (Roffey, 2012).

The above studies pointed to the findings establishing the stressful nature of a teaching job and ways to improve the psychological well-being of teachers. Given the scarcity of Indian studies on psychological well-being of teachers, this study explored the differential impact of various demographic variables such type of college, gender, marital status and years of experience to understand the possible contributing factors that impact psychological well-being.

Objectives

1. To assess the effect of demographic differences in gender, marital status and years of experience on psychological well-being of teachers.
2. To test whether Pre-University, Academic Degree College and Professional degree college teachers differ significantly on psychological well-being.

Hypotheses

To meet the above objectives the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H₀1: There is no significant difference among teachers with varying years of experience on their psychological well-being.
- H₀2: There is no significant difference among teachers of higher secondary, academic degree college and professional degree college on their psychological well-being.
- H₀3: There is no association between the levels of PWB and gender of the teacher.
- H₀4: There is no association between the levels of PWB and marital status of the teacher.

Method

Design of the study

The study used survey method for data collection to assess the psychological well-being of teachers.

Sample

The above stated hypotheses were tested. The sample of the study comprised 945 teachers (125 higher secondary, 198 Academic and 622 Professional teachers) drawn from the available population of teachers in Mysuru using proportionate stratified random sampling method. Higher secondary teachers were equivalent to XI and XII standard teachers. The other two categories referred to under graduation college teachers, while academic teachers refer to teachers of Arts, Science and Commerce; and Professional teachers taught subjects like Engineering, Medicine, Law, Education, Physical Education and Music.

Tools

The tool used for the research was psychological well-being (PWB) — 20 (Mehrotra, Tripathi, and Banu 2013), a modified Indian version of the Ryff Scale (Ryff and Kyes, 1995), that conceptualised psychological well-being as comprising — (i) self acceptance, (ii) mastery and competence, (iii) positive relations, and (iv) engagement and growth, was used.

Results and Discussion

The tool was administered on 945 teachers and on the basis of the results the above hypotheses were tested. Each of the demographic variables was discussed as:

Impact of Years of Experience

Table 1 shows that the teachers with 20 and above years of service have the highest mean PWB score (96.57), followed by those with 10–20 years of experience (95.33) and lastly by teachers with 0–10 years of service (92.08). So apparently, it seemed that the PWB levels improved as experience increases. The standard deviation of all the three groups were similar (ranging from 13.49–13.89) showing that the variance in the 3 groups was similar, while the SEM scores ranging from 0.53–1.36 showed that the sample means were very close to the population means. The difference between the mean performance of three groups was significant ($F=7.74$; $df=2, 942$; $p < 0.01$). It means, the number of years of experience has a differential impact on PWB.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Years of Experience and PWB Level

Years of experience	N	Mean	SD	SEm
0–10	650	92.08	13.49	0.53
10–20	190	95.33	13.81	1.00
20 and ABOVE	105	96.57	13.89	1.36
Total	945	93.24	13.70	0.45

Table 2 shows that the difference was significant between 0–10 years and 10–20 years ($p < 0.05$) in favour of the latter, and 0–10 years and 20 and above ($p < 0.05$) in favour of the latter, while, the difference was not significant between 10–20 years and 20 and above years ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, it implies that perhaps PWB appears to increase with years of experience in the initial and middle years of work and then stabilises towards end of one's career. Though it must be admitted that psychological well-being was not only influenced by the number of years of service, but life in general. Teachers with over 20 years work experience may have a crystallised view of overall well-being with life. Other studies too have found psychological well-being to increase with work experience or age (Van Petegem, Creemers, Rossel, and Aelterman, 2005; Bezuidenhout and Cilliers, 2011; Fong and Ng, 2012; and Mahboubi et al., 2015).

It appeared that the older or more experienced people experience more meaning in work, as they became more conscious of their purpose in life (Chalofsky and Krishna, 2009). With increase in work experience comes a maturity for handling stress and adaptation to the work environment resulting in higher psychological well-being. Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages of development also focused on this trend.

Table 2: Significance of Difference among Varying Years of Experience and Psychological Well-being using Tukey's Post Hoc Test

(I) Years of Experience	(J) Years of Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	Sig.
0-10	10-20	-3.247*	1.122	0.01
	20 and above	-4.487*	1.431	0.01
10-20	0-10	3.247*	1.122	0.01
	20 and above	-1.240	1.654	0.74
20 and above	0-10	4.487*	1.431	0.01
	10-20	1.240	1.654	0.74

Impact of College Affiliation on PWB

Table 3 indicated that the professional degree college teachers scored highest (Mean = 94.35) on PWB, followed by academic degree college teachers (91.41) and higher secondary teachers (90.60). Both, the overall mean PWB of the group (93.24) and the individual PWB score of each group of teachers was in the average PWB category. The standard deviation depicting the variance in the sample was almost similar for all the 3 group with the least for higher secondary teachers (11.85), followed by professional degree college teachers (13.61) and lastly by academic degree college teachers (14.67). The SEM ranges from 0.55-1.06, which showed that the sample mean was representative of the population mean. The difference in the mean performance of three groups was significant ($F=6.17$; $df=2, 942$, $p<.01$).

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Higher Secondary School, Academic Degree and Professional Degree College Teachers on Psychological Well-being

College Type	Number	Mean	SD	SEm
Higher Secondary	125	90.60	11.85	1.06
Academic Degree	198	91.41	14.67	1.04

Professional Degree	622	94.35	13.61	0.55
Total	945	93.24	13.70	0.45

Tukey's post hoc test (Table 4) indicated that the professional degree college teachers have significantly higher PWB levels than both higher secondary teachers ($p < 0.05$) and academic college teachers ($p < 0.05$). However, there was no significant difference in the PWB levels between academic and higher secondary teachers. There could be a number of reasons to account for the higher PWB among professional teachers such as a more satisfying job experience owing to greater practical component in teaching, generally better working conditions and salary. There is a dearth of studies on measuring the level of psychological well-being among different categories of colleges. A related concept to workplace psychological well-being is job satisfaction. Some studies on job satisfaction showed that there was no significant difference in the job satisfaction between private and government colleges (Panda, 2001; Khan, 2012) while others have shown that private college teachers to have higher job satisfaction (Ghafoor, 2012).

Table 4: Significance of Difference among Higher Secondary School, Academic Degree and Professional Degree College Teachers on PWB Using Tukey's Post Hoc Test

(I) College Type	(J) College Type	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Academic	Professional	-2.93*	1.11	0.02
	Higher secondary	0.81	1.56	0.86
Professional	Academic	2.93*	1.11	-0.02
	Higher secondary	3.75*	1.37	-0.01
Higher secondary	Academic	-0.81	1.56	-0.86
	Professional	-3.75*	1.37	-0.01

Impact of Gender on PWB

The total sample consisted of 497 male teachers and 448 female teachers, taking the total to 945 teachers (Table 5). The numbers have been converted into percentages for easy comparison. On high psychological well-being level both male and female teachers

were alike with female teachers having an edge (19 per cent female vs 17 per cent male). The trend was similar for average level of PWB (64 per cent female vs 62 per cent male), but on low level of PWB, there were slightly more percentage of male teachers compared to female teachers. Apparently, the female teachers have an edge over male teachers on the PWB.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Levels of PWB and Gender of Teachers

PWB	Female	Male	Total
High	93 (19%)	77 (17%)	170 (18%)
Average	321 (64%)	279 (62%)	600 (64%)
Low	83 (17%)	92 (21%)	175 (18%)
Total	497 (100%)	448 (100%)	945 (100%)

The chi-square analysis in Table 6 showed that there was no significant association between the levels of PWB and gender. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted and hence it stated that gender has no significant impact on the level of PWB experienced by the teacher. There were mixed results regarding PWB levels among the two genders. Some studies reported that the psychological well-being, or correlated constructs, such as job satisfaction, were higher among women (Sailendren, 1998; Arassammal, 2006; Ahmed, Raheem and Jamal 2003; Katoch, 2012; Rani, and Choudhary, 2012; Dheva Krishnan, 2012). Srimathi and Kumar (2010) founded that women teachers had highest total psychological well-being scores. Studies have shown higher scores for women on some sub-scales, such as those assessing social functioning (for example, Huppert, Walters, Day, and Elliott, 1989; Ryff and Singer, 1998). While other studies reported in favour of male teachers (Pabla, 2012; Maharajan and Kaur, 2012; Stephens, Dulberg and Joubert, 1999). Some of the reasons given by these studies included greater control over work experienced by men (Bryce, et al., 2003), and higher anxiety levels among women due to the multiple roles they played (Dongare, 2018). Other studies have found no gender difference in PWB levels (Salimrad and Srimathi, 2016; Lal and Shergil, 2012; Khan, I 2012; Sharma, G., 2014; Donovan and Halpern, 2002; Helliwell, 2003).

Table 6: Association between Levels of PWB and Gender of Teachers using Chi-Square

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.374a	2	0.305
Likelihood Ratio	2.372	2	0.305
No. of Valid Cases	945		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 80.59. Note: $\chi^2 (1, N=945) = 2.37, p > 0.05$.

Impact of Marital Status on PWB

Table 7 shows that the largest number of teachers whether married (63 per cent) or single (63 per cent) had average PWB, with more married teachers having High PWB level (20 per cent) than single teachers (16 per cent). With regard to low PWB levels there were more single teachers (21 per cent) than married teachers (17 per cent).

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Levels of PWB and Marital Status of Teachers

PWB	Married	Single	Total
High	125 (20%)	45 (16%)	170 (18%)
Average	420 (63%)	180 (63%)	600 (64%)
Low	115 (17%)	60 (21%)	175 (18%)
Total	660 (100%)	285 (100%)	945 (100%)

However, as depicted in Table 8, there was no significant association between PWB level and marital status. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. It means, the marital status was not associated with PWB level significantly. Contrary to this finding, there were studies which have shown positive relationship between marriage and well-being and related concepts, such as life satisfaction (Gledenhuys and Henn, 2017; Takawira, 2014; Stack and Eshleman, 1998; Ngoo et al., 2015; Lee and Lee 2013; and Filiz, 2014).

Table 8: Significance of Association between Levels of PWB and Marital Status using Chi-square

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.520a	2	0.284

Likelihood Ratio	2.514	2	0.284
No. of Valid Cases	945		

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 51.27. Note: $\chi^2(1, N=945) = 2.52$ $p > 0.05$

Implications of the Study

The results indicated that the professional degree college teachers have better levels of psychological well-being compared to academic degree college and higher secondary teachers. This needed an in depth study to explore the causes for the varying levels of PWB among teachers. All educational setups need to recognise the necessity to create conducive working environment that promotes psychological well-being of teachers. This could range from ensuring availability of required resources (physical, human, infrastructure, money and time), providing autonomy, allocating adequate work load, mechanisms to recognise teacher efforts and achievements, in place.

With regard to years of experience and PWB, psychological well-being was seen to improve with experience. This would imply that extra efforts need to be made in the early years to improve teacher psychological well-being and continue to support it over the middle years, especially when work-life balance was severely challenged. Further, in a well meaning working environment, experienced teachers who have a stable sense of psychological well-being, can perhaps act as mentors intrinsically to younger teachers and guide them through the process, thereby working towards the organisational mental health. Thus, the whole system becomes healthy and vibrant. Such systemic reforms indeed can facilitate quality teaching-learning in schools and colleges.

Further, since the study results indicated that gender and marital status didn't have any significant association with PWB, it may be assumed that psychological well-being is a requirement for all categories of teachers. Though traditionally it was assumed that only working married women experience work related stress, the findings of this study suggested that all categories of employees whether male or female, married or unmarried were alike in their experience of psychological well-being and need equal amount of support and attention to improve their psychological well-being levels.

Too long has the psychological well-being of teachers been neglected, too long have teachers been put on a pedestal assumed to have all positive attributes, it is time we realise that teachers like any other profession require supportive management interventions to ensure their psychological well-being, thereby assuring quality for themselves and for all stakeholders of the system.

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