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Well-Being in the Work of Preschool Teachers

Dobrostan w pracy nauczycieli wychowania przedszkolnego

Abstract: Teacher well-being is a key factor that conditions the learning process and influences the pedagogical relationship. A study published by the European Commission (2023a) states that 50% of teachers experience stress at work and recommends that curricula include a component dedicated to "Personal, Social and Learning to Learn" key competence (2023b). For this study, using an autoethnographic methodology, we accompanied three preschool (kindergarten) teachers during their intervention with children with special needs in the family home, with the aim of understanding the constraints on teacher well-being when working in a non-formal setting. The analysis of the narratives presented by these professionals revealed several related categories and highlighted the need for effective support to foster emotional resilience. It is necessary to conduct more research on this topic with teachers from other levels of education and to use different research questions, methodologies, and contexts for further exploration.

Keywords: well-being; teacher education; early childhood intervention; autoethnography

Abstrakt: Dobrostan nauczycieli warunkuje proces uczenia się i wpływa na relację pedagogiczną. W badaniu opublikowanym przez Komisję Europejską stwierdzono, że 50% nauczycieli doświadcza stresu w pracy i zaleca się, aby programy nauczania obejmowały obszar poświęcony „Osobistemu, społecznemu i uczeniu się". Wykorzystując metodologię autoetnografii, towarzyszyliśmy trzem nauczycielkom przedszkolnym podczas ich interwencji z dziećmi o specjalnych potrzebach w domu rodzinnym w celu zrozumienia ograniczeń dobrostanu nauczyciela podczas pracy w przestrzeni pozaformalnej. Analiza narracji przedstawionych przez nauczycielki pozwoliła wyodrębnić powiązane kategorie i wskazać potrzebę skutecznego wsparcia w rozwijaniu odporności emocjonalnej. Konieczne jest przeprowadzenie większej liczby badań na ten temat – z udziałem nauczycieli na innych poziomach edukacji oraz z wykorzystaniem zróżnicowanych pytań badawczych, metodologii i kontekstów – aby pogłębić eksplorację zagadnienia.

Słowa kluczowe: dobrostan; kształcenie nauczycieli; wczesna interwencja dziecięca; autoetnografia

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INTRODUCTION

In educational contexts, teacher well-being – closely linked with student well-being – encompasses various emotional and cognitive dimensions that contribute to a sense of belonging within a community. Building knowledge and establishing a positive relationship with learning require a multidimensional commitment that is not always easy to achieve for all stakeholders involved in education. According to WHO (2022), positive mental health in youth is a state of well-being in which individuals realize their own abilities, cope with normal stresses of life, develop a positive identity, manage their emotions, build social relationships, and engage in meaningful learning. While that definition focuses on children and young people, its core elements underscore how health and well-being are intertwined with the capacity to overcome obstacles and find creative ways to solve problems – principles that apply equally to teachers. This interplay between personal feelings, motivation, and openness to learning should be considered in daily school life. Without a sense of belonging and a clear understanding of purpose in the educational process, both teachers and students will find it difficult to fully "tune in", and learning will be compromised.

For the purposes of this paper, well-being can be understood as a holistic state characterized by overall quality of life, a sense of fulfilment, and the ability to thrive both personally and professionally (Ruggeri et al., 2020). Investigating well-being and its importance in our lives involves examining multiple lenses and contexts. Various frameworks conceptualize well-being as a multidimensional construct encompassing physical health, mental/emotional wellness, social connectedness, and other facets of life (Huppert & So, 2013; Kenrick et al., 2010; Keyes, 1998). In the educational sphere, a teacher's well-being is influenced not only by personal factors but also by relationships with students and families and the broader school community. Issues of well-being have been studied for years, but it is increasingly important to integrate this knowledge into teacher education. Treating well-being as a cross-cutting element in teacher training can better prepare educators to manage classroom environments and curricula in ways that meet learners' needs. Adopting a comprehensive perspective on well-being – including physical, mental, emotional, social, academic, and even environmental dimensions – highlights that knowledge of well-being is fundamental in teacher training if we aim to ultimately empower students' lives.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the experiences of preschool teachers regarding their well-being during home visits with children with special needs, using autoethnography as the research method. Specifically, we examine the challenges and supports related to teacher well-being in the context of early childhood intervention at the family home. By understanding these experiences, we aim to identify what forms of support, training, or curricular emphasis might be needed to foster teacher well-being in such settings. In doing so, we hope to inform how teacher education programs and professional development can better address well-being as a critical component of teachers' professional knowledge and practice.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE ON STUDENT AND TEACHER WELL-BEING

There are diverse theoretical frameworks and models that constitute the basis for the study of student and teacher well-being. In this work, we highlight several perspectives that help contextualize the importance of including well-being in teacher training.

Self-determination theory (SDT)

One pertinent framework is self-determination theory, which emphasizes basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) to promote intrinsic motivation and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2015). In educational settings, SDT has been proposed to help students "flourish". For example, Ryan et al. (2023) describe the aim of education as enabling students to flourish; this concept of flourishing involves not only cognitive development but also qualities such as agency, prosocial relationships, and psychological wellness (Seligman, 2011). A teacher who incorporates SDT principles into their practice can view student well-being as an engine for learning. By supporting students' autonomy and relatedness in the classroom, teachers may foster environments where well-being and learning reinforce each other. The literature suggests that when teachers attend to these holistic needs, it can contribute to positive changes in educational practices and even influence curricula and policies to better center student well-being (Ryan et al., 2023; Seligman, 2011).

Socio-ecological model

Another useful framework is Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological systems theory, which considers the interplay between individual, interpersonal, organizational, and societal factors in shaping well-being within educational settings (Stanley & Kuo, 2022). This perspective "takes a village" approach, recognizing that a teacher's well-being and a student's well-being are embedded in a layered context of family, school, and community influences. For example, supportive school leadership, engaged parents, and broader community resources can all impact a teacher's stress levels and motivation. Using Bronfenbrenner's lens helps illustrate how a teacher working in an early childhood intervention program must navigate multiple contexts: the needs of the child, the expectations of the family, and the policies of educational institutions. Understanding these ecological influences on well-being is important for developing interventions that support teachers. In our study's context, this model reminds us that when a teacher enters a family's home, they are operating at the intersection of several systems (teacher–child–family–community), and each of these layers can affect the teacher's well-being and effectiveness.

Other perspectives on well-being

Positive psychology and humanistic education theories also contribute to the discourse on teacher and student well-being. Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of well-being (encompassing Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement) provides a comprehensive framework for what it means to flourish, and many of these elements are relevant to teachers' professional fulfilment. Similarly, classic ideas like Maslow's hierarchy of needs – recently updated by Kenrick et al. (2010) – highlight that basic needs (physical well-being, safety) and social needs (belonging, esteem) must be met for individuals to reach their full potential. In the context of teaching, this implies that teachers who feel safe, valued, and connected are more likely to thrive and be effective in their roles. Moreover, concepts of emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) suggest that teachers who are skilled in recognizing and managing emotions (their own and others') can better cope with stress and build positive relationships in the classroom. These theoretical insights all reinforce the idea that teacher well-being is multifaceted and deeply intertwined with the educational environment. For this reason, contemporary researchers argue that well-being should be included as a focus in teacher training curricula, so that educators are equipped with strategies to maintain their well-being and, in turn, support the well-being of their students.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AS A METHOD FOR EXPLORING PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

For Ellis et al. (2011) autoethnography is a qualitative research approach in which the researcher's personal experiences serve as primary data for analysis, yielding insights into broader social and cultural phenomena. This method has gained relevance in educational research, as it illuminates the lived experiences of teachers, students, and other stakeholders in ways that more conventional approaches often cannot. By using the voices and perspectives of those directly involved in educational processes, autoethnography can reveal nuanced complexities of teaching and learning – encompassing everyday dynamics of power, institutional norms, and interpersonal relationships – that might be overlooked by more impersonal methods (Adams, 2008).

The strength of the autoethnographic approach lies in its ability to shed light on issues of individual agency and identity within educational settings (Ellis et al., 2011). When researchers turn the analytic lens on their own experiences as educators or learners, they can examine how power relations operate in schools and how they negotiate their roles within these structures. A teacher–researcher might reflect on how administrative policies constrain their classroom autonomy or consider how personal cultural background influences interactions with students. Such introspective

yet contextually grounded inquiry offers a critical vantage point for understanding the diverse realities that educators encounter, while also informing efforts to promote more equitable and empathetic practices in education.

In the present study, autoethnography is employed as the central methodology, since the researcher is simultaneously an educator engaging in reflective practice alongside the participant teachers. Adopting an autoethnographic lens specifically focused on teacher well-being – encompassing both professional and personal dimensions – allows for an in-depth examination of how well-being is experienced and perceived in the cultural context of preschool home visits. This approach underscores the significance of well-being in the daily life of educational practice and illuminates how theoretical concepts of teacher well-being are realized in real-world settings (OpenAI, 2023). The following section details the implementation of this methodology, including how the researcher's experiential narrative was interwoven with the accounts of the participant teachers.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted as a qualitative study using autoethnographic methods, focusing on the experiences of three preschool teachers who work in early childhood intervention teams. These teachers all provide support through home visits (domiciliary interventions) to families of children with special needs. The main goal of the study was to understand the needs and constraints faced by these teachers when working outside the traditional school setting, in the family home environment.

To investigate these professionals' needs – such as needs for training, emotional support, and problem-solving strategies in complex family situations – it was essential to consider the context of their work. The family home is a space loaded with meaning as described by Augé (1986), meaning it carries cultural and emotional significance for its inhabitants. Home context can affect the educational action taking place there, in part because each family operates with its own set of cultural norms and routines that may be unfamiliar to the visiting teacher. Describing these settings and teachers' experiences within them, we gain insight into how the cultural context and environment influence their professional practice and well-being.

We employed multiple methods to *listen to the voices* of the teachers in this autoethnographic study, combining reflective journaling, participant observation, and interviews to explore the dynamics of the intervention. As the researcher, participated as an observer in the field: whenever possible, accompanied the teachers on their home visits to directly observe the interactions and environment. During and after these visits, the researcher took detailed field notes and maintained a reflective journal throughout the study, in which shedocumented personal thoughts, feelings,

and experiences related to the home visits. This journal included reflections on notable events, challenges, and reactions as an educator entering the family space. The reflective journaling helped in examining biases and connecting personal experience with those of the participants, thereby integrating the "auto" (self) element into the ethnographic data.

In addition, we conducted in-depth interviews with each of the three teachers to gather their narratives about working in family homes. Each teacher participated in at least one semi-structured interview (approx. 60–90 minutes in length), during which they recounted specific stories and challenges from their home visit experiences. These interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, yielding rich first-person accounts (narratives) of the teachers' thoughts and emotions in their work. Follow-up conversations and clarifications were carried out as needed to enrich the narratives and ensure accuracy of interpretation. Together, the interview transcripts, my field notes from observations, and my reflective journal entries constituted the primary dataset for the study.

All participants were informed about the nature and purpose of the research before the data collection began. They were provided with comprehensive information about the study's objectives, procedures, and ethical considerations, including potential risks and benefits of participation. Each participant gave explicit informed consent for the use of data from their personal narratives, interviews, and observed practice. To protect confidentiality, all names and identifying details were anonymized in the transcripts and in any reporting of the findings.

For data analysis, I utilized a qualitative thematic analysisapproach to identify patterns and themes within the collected narratives. Initially, I repeatedly read through the interview transcripts and my journal entries to immerse myself in the data. I conducted open coding manually, marking recurring ideas, concerns, and observations that related to teacher well-being. These codes included, for example, mentions of stress or emotional strain, references to lack of support or training, coping strategies the teachers used, and positive experiences or rewardsof the work. As coding progressed, I compared and clustered similar codes into broader categories. Through this iterative process, a set of key themes emerged that were common across all three teachers' stories. To enhance the rigor of the analysis, I engaged in reflexive discussions with a colleague (not involved in the study) about the preliminary codes and themes. This peer debriefing helped to challenge my interpretations and ensure that the themes were grounded in the actual data rather than my assumptions. The final themes were those that consistently appeared in all participants' narratives and were most relevant to the research question on teacher well-being. These themes and their interpretations are presented in the next section. By integrating multiple data sources (observation, interview, and personal reflection) and systematically coding the data, I aimed to ensure that the findings reliably represent the shared experiences of the participants, enriched by the autoethnographic insight of the researcher.

THE PARTICIPANTS' PROFILES

All three participants in this study are female preschool teachers with between 10 and 15 years of professional teaching experience. They are approx. 35 to 40 years old. Two of the teachers have completed postgraduate specialization in special education, and the third has an academic background in psychology (a graduate degree in psychology). At the time of the study, each of these teachers was working as a member of a local Early Childhood Intervention team, which is a multidisciplinary team that supports young children with developmental delays or special needs and their families. As part of their duties on the early intervention team, the teachers conduct regular home visits to the families under their care – typically visiting each assigned family twice a week.

The families that the participants work with often face multiple challenges and are supported by various community services. In addition to the educational support from the early intervention team, these families commonly receive assistance from health services, social services, and child protection agencies in the community. The common factor among the families in this study is that each family has a young child with identified special needs (such as developmental disorders or disabilities) who is receiving early intervention services. The role of the preschool teacher in this context is to provide educational activities, model strategies for the parents, and support the child's learning and development in the home environment. All three participating teachers share a commitment to helping these children and families, but they also face the unique difficulties that come with teaching in a non-traditional setting, as will be evident in their narratives. By briefly outlining their profiles, we set the stage for understanding the perspectives they bring to the study: seasoned educators with relevant training, working in an outreach capacity beyond the preschool classroom.

NARRATIVE ANALYSES

Human experience is often organized and understood through stories, and analyzing these teachers' stories helps reveal how they make sense of their professional lives (Bruner, 1986). Through the interviews and reflective journals, each teacher recounted powerful experiences about entering and working within their students' family homes. Unlike a classroom setting where teachers have clear authority and control, the home environment places the teacher as a guest – in fact, a stranger who must be received into the private space of the family. This dynamic is inherently delicate: the family's home is an intimate setting, and the teacher's presence there (even when expected as part of an intervention program) can feel intrusive. The narratives vividly convey this tension and the way the teachers navigate it.

Analysing the content of the three teachers' narratives, several common themes emerged regarding their well-being and professional practice during home visits. Be-

low, we discuss the key themes supported by evidence from their stories (participants' voices are provided in translation where applicable).

Need for professional support and training

All participants underscored the importance of proper training and ongoing support to equip them for working in home settings. They felt that their pre-service education had not fully prepared them for the realities of entering families' homes and addressing special needs in that context. The teachers noted that much of what they learned about handling these situations came "on the job", through trial and error. One educator explicitly identified on-the-job learning as crucial, stating that adapting to the diverse realities of children's homes required listening to the family's voice and practical training in the field. She explained that each visit taught her something new that formal training had not covered. This sentiment was echoed across all narratives: they desired more structured guidance, such as workshops or mentorship, focused on home intervention skills and managing their own stress. The lack of regular supervision or professional support left them feeling that they had to "figure things out on our own", which sometimes led to uncertainty. As one participant described, the absence of clear guidance could result in profound self-doubt: "I felt unbelievably bad... after leaving there I always had a feeling of frustration, of not knowing what my role was with that family" (participant's voice). This quote illustrates how, without adequate preparation or feedback, the teacher was unsure of her professional identity and boundaries during the home visits. All three teachers agreed that having more ongoing professional development and supervisory support (for example, debriefing sessions or coaching from specialists) would greatly improve their confidence and well-being in these roles. They emphasized that such support would help them handle the emotional challenges and develop effective strategies, ultimately making their interventions more effective.

Emotional demands and resilience

The emotional impact of working in family homes emerged as another strong theme. The teachers frequently reported feelings of loneliness and uncertainty when they were out in the field by themselves. Unlike in a school, where colleagues or administrators are nearby for immediate consultation or moral support, a teacher on a home visit operates solo. The participants described walking into an "unknown country" each time they visited a new family – highlighting the unpredictability and anxiety this spurred. One teacher noted that every family's situation was different, and this unpredictability made her feel "on edge"until she understood the household dynamics. There were also positive emotions: they spoke of moments of joy and satisfaction, for instance, when seeing a child's progress or when a family expressed gratitude.

However, those positive moments were often tempered by stress. The teachers had to manage their own emotional responses to difficult situations (such as witnessing a family's hardship or a child's medical issues) while still performing professionally. Each of the participants mentioned the need to build emotional resilience to cope with these demands. They found themselves developing personal coping strategies: one practiced mindfulness and deep breathing before entering a home to focus on oneself, while another would debrief by writing in a journal (as used in our study) or talking to a trusted colleague after particularly challenging visits. Despite these strategies, all agreed that institutional recognition of these emotional challenges was lacking. They advocated for formal avenues of emotional support – such as counselling services for teachers or peer support groups – as part of their work structure. This would help validate their feelings and prevent burnout. In fact, the narratives revealed subtle signs of burnout: for example, the teacher who said she "went with little will" to some visits because she anticipated feeling drained afterward. This highlights the critical need for interventions that support teacher well-being, so that teachers can maintain their motivation and continue to engage positively with children and families.

Navigating family dynamics and boundaries

A third theme focuses on how teachers navigate the complex family dynamics and the boundaries between their professional role and the personal space of the family. Working in a family's home means that teachers must quickly adjust to the household's rules, routines, and culture. The participants described this as "fitting into someone else's world" temporarily. One teacher shared a poignant reflection that "working with children with special needs in families' homes teaches us to see things in a different way; it teaches us to be more tolerant, to be more able to listen, to pay attention to small details that would go unnoticed if we were in a kindergarten" (participant's voice). This quote exemplifies how the home setting broadened her perspective and skills – she became attuned to nuances like family interactions or the child's behaviour in a natural environment, which might be masked in a classroom. However, along with this deeper understanding came the challenge of maintaining professional boundaries. The teachers all mentioned a delicate balancing act: they must build trust and rapport with the family (often becoming quite close over weeks of visits) but also maintain their professional objectivity and authority. One participant described it as having to "take ownership of the space without being intrusive, and get emotionally involved with those who inhabit it, without losing [my] professional position". Families would sometimes treat the visiting teacher as a friend or even like a member of the family over time. In fact, after numerous visits, a teacher can start to feel very comfortable – "when we often go to a place, we begin to appropriate that space in a more personal way" (participant's voice) – and this can blur the lines of professionalism. The educators discussed scenarios where this boundary was tested:

for instance, a parent might start confiding marital issues to the teacher or ask the teacher to join a family meal. The teachers had to learn how to respond compassionately but also steer interactions back to the child's intervention needs. They recognized that setting healthy boundaries was important not only for professional reasons but for their own well-being; taking on too much emotional burden from families could become overwhelming. The narratives indicate that with time and experience, the teachers became more adept at this balancing act. They highlighted the value of cultural sensitivity and communication skills – being respectful of the family's home and culture, listening more than talking initially, and clearly defining their role to the family. All participants agreed that working intimately with families ultimately made them more reflective and empathetic educators. They carried lessons learned from the home (such as new communication techniques or patience in dealing with sensitive issues) back into their school-based practice. This theme illustrates that the well-being of the teacher is interconnected with the well-being of the family and child; when boundaries and expectations are managed well, everyone benefits, but when roles are unclear, it causes stress for the teacher and potentially the family.

In resume, the narratives of the preschool teachers revealed how demanding yet impactful their home-visit work is. They highlighted a need for better preparation and support, the significant emotional labour involved, and the complex relational dynamics they must manage. These stories also demonstrate the resilience and adaptive skills of the teachers, who find ways to thrive and find meaning in a challenging context. As one teacher's story showed, perspective-taking and empathy grow from these experiences – "it teaches us to be more tolerant…to pay attention to small details" – suggesting that with proper support, such work can enrich a teacher's practice. It is evident, however, that systemic changes (in training, support, and recognition of this work) are necessary to sustain teacher well-being. As Rutledge (2020) observes, the stories we tell and live by can shape our mindset and influence our future paths. The participants' narratives, when critically examined, have not only shed light on their personal struggles and triumphs but also point toward broader changes needed in the education system to better support teacher well-being in diverse contexts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the analysis of the participants' narratives, well-being is a crucial aspect of teachers' professional experience and should be considered a vital part of their knowledge and training. The findings of this study reinforce the recognition of teacher well-being as fundamental to effective teaching and learning. In practical terms, this means that teachers must be supported in prioritizing their own well-being, as doing so can have a direct positive impact on their students' outcomes. When a teacher is emotionally balanced, adequately trained, and feels professionally supported, they

are more likely to create a productive learning environment for children – even in challenging non-traditional settings like a family's home. In the context of early intervention home visits, this becomes even more important: the unique stresses of working in homes make well-being supports not optional, but necessary for the teacher to function effectively.

Although the experiences explored in this research took place in a non-formal space – the family home – the professional role of the educator remains fundamentally the same as in a classroom. The teacher is still an educator with objectives to help the child learn and develop; what changes is the environment and the resources available. This study's narratives show that when the classroom extends into a living room, the teacher's role expands to include being a guest and a collaborator with the family. This dual role can strain a teacher's well-being if not managed, but it also reaffirms the teacher's professional identity in a new light. The core competencies (like pedagogical knowledge, empathy, communication skills) are still crucial, but they must be applied differently. Recognizing this, there is a fundamental needfor ongoing professional development and support tailored to such contexts. Regular training sessions on home visitation techniques, mentorship programs, or reflective practice groups could help teachers prepare for and debrief from home visits, thereby reducing feelings of isolation and anxiety. The participants in our study explicitly indicated that if they had access to continuous learning opportunities and supervisory guidance, they would feel more confident and less stressed in their jobs. This underscores a gap in current teacher training and professional support systems that needs addressing.

Conversations with the participant teachers also shed light on specific dimensions of teaching professionalism that are often taken for granted. One such dimension is the teacher's awareness of how everyone's well-being is interlinked during the intervention process. The educators came to realize that their own well-being, the child's well-being, and the family's well-being were deeply interconnected and together influenced the success of the educational intervention. For instance, if a teacher was exhausted or overwhelmed, they might not deliver the best support to the child; if the family was distrustful or distressed, it affected the teacher's ability to engage the child. This aligns with the concept of emotional intelligence in teaching – the ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) – which is crucial in these situations. The teachers who could attune to a mother's anxiety or a child's discomfort and adjust their approach accordingly tended to report more positive experiences. Thus, a greater emphasis on developing teachers' social-emotional skills and awareness of well-being dynamics could be highly beneficial. In sum, our findings highlight that teacher professionalism in early intervention must include a keen perception of well-being factors and the skills to address them.

Finally, these narratives point towards a needed shift in educational policy and institutional mindset: valuing teacher well-being not as an afterthought, but as a foundation for educational quality. When teachers in specialized roles (like home visitors)

report that they need more support, it indicates that educational systems should broaden the scope of teacher welfare provisions. This could mean integrating well-being topics into teacher education curricula (e.g. training teachers in self-care strategies, stress management, and boundary-setting) and ensuring that school administrations have frameworks in place to monitor and promote teacher well-being. By doing so, we are likely to see not only improved teacher retention and satisfaction, but also better developmental outcomes for students, since teacher well-being and student well-being are often mutually reinforcing.

CONCLUSIONS

This autoethnographic study explored the well-being of preschool teachers working in the context of home visits for early childhood intervention. Through reflective narratives and analysis, we found that teacher well-being is an essential factor that influences teaching effectiveness and the quality of teacher–child interactions, especially in non-traditional educational settings. The participating teachers' experiences underscored the need for clearer preparation, more robust support systems, and increased awareness of the emotional and professional challenges they face when teaching outside the classroom environment.

A key conclusion is that teacher well-being should be recognized and addressed as a core component of teacher training and professional development. The insights from this study suggest that teacher education programs would benefit from including training on managing stress, building resilience, and navigating complex family dynamics, so that educators feel better equipped for a variety of teaching contexts. Schools and educational organizations, especially those involving home-based programs, should consider implementing support structures such as mentorship, regular supervision, and counselling or peer support groups for teachers. By doing so, teachers are more likely to maintain high levels of well-being, which, in turn, enables them to provide higher quality support to their students.

It is important to note that this study was conducted with a small number of participants in a specific context, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, further research is necessary to deepen our understanding of teacher well-being across different settings and populations. Future studies could involve teachers from other educational levels (primary, secondary, etc.) to see if they face similar well-being challenges or if new themes emerge. Different research questions and methodologies could be employed – for example, longitudinal studies could examine how supporting teacher well-being affects outcomes like teacher retention and job satisfaction over time, or experimental studies could test specific interventions (such as a teacher wellness program) for effectiveness. Cross-cultural research would also be valuable, comparing how teacher well-being is perceived and supported in various educational

systems or countries. Such comparative work might reveal cultural factors that protect or endanger teacher well-being.

Ultimately, advancing our understanding of teacher well-being will require ongoing dialogue and collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. Teachers' voices – like those presented in this study – should inform this dialogue, ensuring that policies and programs are grounded in the reality of educators' experiences. By prioritizing the well-being of teachers in both policy and practice, educational stakeholders can create a more supportive environment for teachers. In the long run, investing in teacher well-being is an investment in educational quality: teachers who are well-supported and resilient are better able to inspire and engage their students, adapt to challenges, and remain committed to the profession. Thus, fostering teacher well-being is not only crucial for the educators themselves, but it also has a ripple effect that can enhance student learning and development, particularly in sensitive contexts such as early childhood intervention.

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