

Teacher Well-Being As A Pathway To Motivation And Teaching Enjoyment: A Field Study In An Arab School In East Jerusalem In Light Of Recent Literature

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Abstract: This study examines the effect of structured well-being initiatives on teacher motivation, emotional engagement, and professional satisfaction in a private Arab school in East Jerusalem. Grounded in recent scholarship on teacher well-being and positive psychology in education, the research integrates practical interventions, such as emotional release workshops, the renovation of the teachers' lounge, and inclusive social events, with a mixed-methods survey involving 30 educators. The findings reveal that when teachers receive emotional support, physical comfort, and a sense of belonging, their motivation and enthusiasm for teaching increase significantly. Emotional release activities equipped teachers with coping strategies to alleviate stress, the revamped lounge fostered comfort and collegial interactions, and school-wide events improved professional recognition and social connection. Together, these initiatives had a synergistic effect that enhanced teachers' professional identity and enjoyment of teaching. In line with prior research, the study confirms that teacher well-being is a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional, physical, and social aspects. However, it further enriches existing knowledge by contextualizing these practices within Arab schools in East Jerusalem, where teachers contend with additional socio-political and institutional pressures. The results underscore that well-being initiatives are essential components of effective school leadership and sustainable teacher engagement rather than peripheral luxuries. By referencing earlier studies in the field, this research emphasizes the need to integrate teacher well-being into educational policies and leadership practices as a foundational structure for resilience, motivation, and improved teaching outcomes.

Keywords: Educational leadership, Motivation, School climate, Teacher well-being, Teacher engagement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher well-being has become a pivotal focus in educational research and policy, especially as educators encounter increasing emotional demands, professional burnout, and systemic stress. In addition to their instructional roles, teachers serve as emotional anchors and community builders within schools. Studies consistently demonstrate that a teacher's psychological state directly influences classroom dynamics, instructional quality, and student outcomes (Yin, Huang, & Wang, 2016; Kun & Gadanecz, 2022). Recent systematic reviews highlight that occupational well-being is a multidimensional construct shaped by both personal and contextual factors, including emotional stability, professional satisfaction, and supportive work environments (Nwoko, Emeto, Malau-Aduli, and Malau-Aduli, 2023). Further research indicates that when schools nurture positive climates and provide adequate institutional support, teachers are more likely to sustain motivation, lower stress levels, and retain a strong sense of professional identity (Benevene, De Stasio, & Fiorilli, 2020; Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). In East Jerusalem, Arab schools face additional socio-political and institutional challenges that heighten the emotional and professional pressures teachers encounter. These challenges often include limited resources, heavy workloads, and structural inequities, which increase teachers' susceptibility to stress and burnout. Research on school climate and work environment illustrates that the quality of physical spaces, collegial relationships, and administrative support significantly affects teachers' professional satisfaction and resilience (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; McCallum, Price, Graham, & Morrison, 2017). Furthermore, studies underscore that teacher well-being cannot be solely attributed to individual coping mechanisms, but is embedded within broader school structures and leadership practices that either encourage or impede teachers' ability to thrive (Mansfield, 2021). In response to these challenges, a private Arab school in East Jerusalem launched a structured well-being initiative aimed at improving teachers' psychological and professional satisfaction. The initiative encompassed three main components: (a) emotional release workshops facilitated by specialists, (b) renovation of the teachers' lounge to enhance physical comfort and promote collegial interaction, and (c) school-wide social events and appreciation activities designed to bolster belonging and recognition. Such

initiatives align with recent research highlighting that proactive institutional practices—rather than reactive individual coping—are vital for maintaining motivation, resilience, and teaching enjoyment (Kun & Gadanez, 2022; Reizer, 2022; Daaboul, 2024).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Well-being: General Definitions

Well-being is a broad concept that has gained increasing attention in organizational and educational research. According to Kun and Gadanez (2022), workplace well-being extends beyond the absence of stress and includes positive dimensions such as happiness, satisfaction, and fulfillment derived from work. Their study on Hungarian teachers indicated that well-being is closely linked to psychological capital, particularly hope, optimism, and resilience. Similarly, the systematic review by Nwoko et al. (2023) emphasized that occupational well-being should be viewed as a multidimensional construct, encompassing emotional stability, social relationships, and professional satisfaction. Significantly, the review pointed out that well-being is not a fixed state but rather a dynamic balance between personal resources and professional demands. Other contributions, such as Yin, Huang, and Wang (2016), demonstrated that well-being must be considered within the context of the workplace. They argued that the manner in which teachers regulate emotions at work (for instance, employing reappraisal instead of suppression) is a core element of maintaining overall well-being. The OECD (2020) framework further emphasizes this perspective, presenting well-being as both a subjective experience of happiness and a professional resource that sustains motivation and effectiveness in teaching. Collectively, these studies suggest that well-being should not be narrowly focused on stress reduction. Instead, it embodies a positive and holistic state involving emotional, psychological, and professional aspects that enable individuals to thrive in their workplace. Additional perspectives further enrich this understanding. Dodge et al. (2012) proposed that well-being can be conceptualized as a dynamic equilibrium between the resources individuals possess and the challenges they encounter. Building on this, Keyes and Ryff (1995) identified six critical dimensions of psychological well-being: self-acceptance, environmental mastery, autonomy, positive relationships with others, personal growth, and purpose in life. Likewise, McCallum and Price (2015) suggested a holistic framework that highlights the interaction of individual, social, and environmental factors across the lifespan, reinforcing that well-being is not a uniform construct but varies according to personal and contextual dynamics. These perspectives closely align with the educational field, where teachers' well-being is profoundly influenced by the interplay of internal resources and external conditions such as collegial support, workload, and institutional culture.

Teacher Well-being: Concepts and Dimensions

Teacher well-being has been defined as a multidimensional construct that integrates emotional, social, and professional experiences. According to Yin, Huang, and Wang (2016), teacher well-being signifies the dynamic balance between personal resources, such as emotional regulation skills, and professional demands like workload, discipline issues, and administrative expectations. Teachers who employ adaptive strategies such as reappraisal typically report higher levels of well-being, while reliance on suppression correlates with greater stress and burnout. The systematic review by Nwoko, Emeto, Malau-Aduli, and Malau-Aduli (2023) underscored that occupational well-being is best viewed as a multidimensional construct comprising emotional stability, social relationships, and professional satisfaction. Importantly, they contended that well-being is not a fixed state but fluctuates based on the interaction between job demands and available resources, reflecting the principles of the Job Demands Resources (JD-R) framework. Similarly, Benevene, De Stasio, and Fiorilli (2020) argued that teacher well-being is not merely the absence of illness or burnout but rather the presence of a positive state of health that enables teachers to flourish in their professional context. Their editorial emphasized that well-being is about maintaining a “healthy and dynamic equilibrium” between resources and challenges in daily teaching life. Other studies have expanded this definition by highlighting the professional dimension of well-being. For instance, Kun and Gadanez (2022) discovered that workplace happiness and psychological capital (hope, optimism, resilience) are strong predictors of teachers' well-being. Their research suggests that teachers with higher psychological capital are more likely to find meaning in their work and sustain motivation over time. Collectively, these perspectives demonstrate that teacher well-being is a composite concept, merging emotional resilience, social support, and professional fulfillment. It

encompasses both hedonic aspects (such as happiness and job satisfaction) and eudaimonic elements (such as meaning, purpose, and professional identity). Recognizing this multidimensionality is crucial for developing strategies that enhance both teacher health and educational outcomes.

Emotional Demands, Burnout, and Job Satisfaction

Teaching is widely acknowledged as one of the most emotionally demanding professions, requiring constant regulation of emotions in daily interactions with students, colleagues, and parents. This ongoing emotional labor frequently leads to stress, fatigue, and, in some instances, burnout if not properly addressed. Burnout, as characterized by Chang (2009), is marked by three main dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment. These symptoms are often reported by teachers who face persistent classroom disruptions, heavy workloads, and insufficient institutional support. Yin, Huang, and Wang (2016) emphasized that teachers' emotion regulation strategies play a mediating role in the relationship between work environment and well-being. Their study revealed that teachers who frequently engaged in reappraisal (positively reframing stressful situations) reported higher well-being, while those relying on suppression experienced lower job satisfaction and increased stress. This highlights that emotion regulation is not merely a coping mechanism but a key factor influencing overall job satisfaction. The balance between emotional demands and available resources also plays a crucial role in shaping job satisfaction. Kun and Gadanez (2022) emphasized that teachers possessing higher levels of psychological capital, optimism, hope, and resilience are better equipped to manage the emotional challenges of teaching. These internal resources act as protective factors, buffering against burnout while enhancing professional fulfillment. More broadly, Nwoko, Emeto, Malau-Aduli, and Malau-Aduli (2023), in their systematic review of occupational well-being, identified burnout prevention as a global priority. Their findings advocate for structural policies aimed at reducing workload, ensuring institutional recognition, and fostering positive school climates to sustain teacher motivation and resilience. In summary, while teaching is undoubtedly emotionally taxing, burnout is not an unavoidable outcome. Schools that promote adaptive emotional strategies, nurture teachers' psychological capital, and cultivate supportive organizational environments can significantly safeguard teacher well-being and enhance long-term job satisfaction.

Psychological Capital and Motivation

An expanding body of research indicates that teachers' well-being is closely connected to their levels of psychological capital (PsyCap), which includes four core components: hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy. Teachers with higher PsyCap are more likely to maintain motivation, effectively navigate professional challenges, and derive a deeper sense of purpose in their work. Zewude and Hercz (2022), in their thorough literature review, underscored that psychological capital serves as a key predictor of teacher well-being, with motivation functioning as a mediating factor. They argued that hope and optimism help teachers sustain positive attitudes in the face of challenges, while resilience and self-efficacy enhance persistence and confidence in managing classroom demands. This underscores that cultivating psychological resources can be as critical as minimizing external stressors for maintaining teachers' well-being. Similarly, Kun and Gadanez (2022) found that workplace happiness and psychological capital were closely intertwined in their study of Hungarian teachers. Optimism and resilience emerged as predictors of both subjective well-being and workplace engagement, revealing that motivated teachers often draw upon their psychological strengths to persevere in demanding settings. The significance of self-efficacy was further affirmed by Klassen, Durksen, and Patte (2021), who demonstrated that teachers' belief in their instructional capacity is central to sustaining motivation. Recent studies further extend this perspective. Al-Khateeb et al. (2025) revealed that psychological capital not only enhances teachers' mental health and well-being but also fosters organizational citizenship behaviors such as collaboration, responsibility, and educational innovation. These behaviors strengthen collegial trust and professional identity, further reinforcing both teacher motivation and resilience. Together, these findings highlight that PsyCap is both a buffer against burnout and a driver of intrinsic satisfaction, anchoring teachers' ability to thrive professionally.

School Climate and Work Environment

The school climate and overall work environment play a crucial role in shaping teachers' well-being and motivation. A supportive, collaborative, and respectful environment provides teachers with emotional resources that mitigate the negative effects of stress and enhance professional satisfaction. Collie, Shapka,

and Perry (2012) highlighted that school climate, as measured through factors such as collegial trust, administrative support, and student-teacher relationships, strongly predicts teacher stress, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy. Teachers working in environments where they feel valued and supported are more likely to exhibit resilience and sustained motivation. Expanding on this viewpoint, McCallum, Price, Graham, and Morrison (2017) argued that teacher well-being cannot be separated from organizational culture. They emphasized that leaders who adopt supportive practices, including open communication, recognition, and professional development, cultivate environments that diminish burnout and enhance engagement. Similarly, Petegem, Aelterman, Keer, and Rosseel (2008) demonstrated that interpersonal teacher behavior and the quality of relationships within schools influence not only student well-being but also teachers' sense of fulfillment and professional identity. Positive interactions with students correlated with lower stress levels and higher job satisfaction among teachers. The importance of the physical environment was discussed in more recent work, such as Daaboul (2024), who examined Arab teachers' perspectives in East Jerusalem. The study underscored that physical spaces, resource availability, and infrastructural support affect teachers' morale and sense of belonging. A nurturing physical environment reinforces teachers' emotional connection to their schools and supports relational pedagogy based on care and respect. Finally, the systematic review by Viac and Fraser (2023) confirmed that school-level factors such as autonomy, collegial relationships, and leadership quality consistently predict occupational well-being across various educational systems. They highlighted the need for policies that enhance school climate as a structural pathway to improve teacher well-being. In conclusion, school climate is not merely a contextual variable but a determinant of teacher well-being, influencing stress management, professional identity, and long-term commitment to teaching.

Resilience and Emotion Regulation

Resilience has emerged as one of the most significant protective factors for sustaining teacher well-being. It refers to the adaptive capacity to recover from professional setbacks, respond positively to stressors, and maintain effective functioning in the face of adversity. Mansfield (2021) conceptualizes resilience not as a fixed trait but as a process that evolves through continuous interaction between individual resources (e.g., coping strategies, optimism) and contextual supports (e.g., collegiality, supportive leadership). Teachers who cultivate resilience are more likely to uphold motivation and lessen vulnerability to burnout in demanding environments. Closely related to resilience is the regulation of emotions in the workplace. Yin, Huang, and Wang (2016) demonstrated that emotion regulation mediates the relationship between work environment and overall well-being. Their findings indicated that teachers who utilized reappraisal strategies (e.g., positively reframing stressful situations) experienced greater well-being, whereas those who engaged in suppression reported heightened stress and lower satisfaction. This emphasizes that emotional regulation is not merely a coping mechanism but a determinant of professional fulfillment. Recent work by Brandao et al. (2025) further confirmed this perspective, showing that adaptive emotional regulation diminishes emotional exhaustion and enhances teachers' classroom engagement. Teachers employing flexible and positive regulatory strategies reported stronger connections with students and sustained teaching motivation. Zee and Koomen (2016) added another dimension, illustrating that emotional competence and resilience are linked to teachers' self-efficacy. Teachers who effectively manage their emotions are better equipped to create supportive classroom environments, which in turn enhances both student adjustment and teacher satisfaction. In summary, resilience and emotion regulation act as dual mechanisms in sustaining teacher well-being. While resilience provides the broader adaptive capacity to endure long-term challenges, emotion regulation equips teachers with strategies to address daily stressors. Together, they serve to protect against burnout, sustain motivation, and bolster professional commitment.

Teaching with Love and Relational Pedagogy

Teaching transcends mere technical delivery of knowledge and embodies a deeply relational practice grounded in care, respect, and emotional connection. The concept of pedagogical love has garnered increasing attention in recent scholarship as a framework for understanding how emotional and relational dimensions of teaching contribute to both teacher well-being and student flourishing. According to Daaboul (2024), Arab teachers in East Jerusalem articulated that teaching with love is manifested through patience, respect, and the establishment of safe spaces for dialogue. These practices not only strengthen student-teacher relationships but also reinforce teachers' own sense of meaning and belonging within the profession. The

study highlighted that relational pedagogy rooted in love sustains teacher motivation by aligning professional practice with personal values of care and empathy. Supporting this perspective, Daaboul (2025) investigated parental insights into pedagogical love and found that parents view teachers' compassion, patience, and attentiveness as central to their children's educational experiences. This suggests that teaching with love extends beyond the classroom environment and influences broader community perceptions of teachers as moral and emotional role models. Other research echoes this relational approach, emphasizing that emotional support and positive teacher-student interactions act as protective factors against burnout (Collie et al., 2012; McCallum et al., 2017). A relational pedagogy founded on love and care enables teachers to better regulate emotional labor, reducing stress and fostering resilience. Moreover, such approaches contribute to a positive school climate where both teachers and students feel valued and supported. In conclusion, teaching with love embodies a crucial dimension of teacher well-being. By integrating relational pedagogy into school cultures and leadership practices, educational systems can promote not only students' holistic development but also strengthen teachers' professional identity, motivation, and emotional resilience.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study primarily employed a qualitative descriptive design, with a supplementary quantitative component used for descriptive support. The research aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of well-being and its relationship to motivation, professional satisfaction, and school climate. A qualitative approach was selected to capture the depth of teachers' experiences and generate themes grounded in participants' own words, while survey statistics provided descriptive support.

Participants

The study involved 30 teachers from a private Arab school located in East Jerusalem. Participants represented a diverse group in terms of teaching experience, subject specialization, and age range. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was assured. Teachers' identities were coded numerically (e.g., Teacher #5, Teacher #12) to ensure confidentiality while allowing direct quotations to be presented.

Instruments and Data Collection

Data were collected through:

1. Structured Google Form survey consisting of both closed-ended and open-ended questions, targeting perceptions of emotional support, physical work environment, collegial relationships, and professional motivation.
2. Qualitative reflections provided by participants in open-ended responses, where they were encouraged to elaborate on their personal experiences.
3. Field notes and contextual insights drawn from the school's well-being initiatives (emotional release workshops, renovation of the teachers' lounge, and social events).

The survey was designed in alignment with international literature on teacher well-being (Kun & Gadanez, 2022; Viac & Fraser, 2023; Yin et al., 2016), ensuring validity in its conceptual framing.

Procedure

Teachers were invited to participate during the academic year 2024–2025. Data were collected over one month, following the implementation of the school's structured well-being initiatives. Surveys were administered online to facilitate participation. All participants provided informed consent, and the research was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines for educational research.

Data Analysis

To ensure the teachers' experiences were accurately represented, we analyzed their responses using a systematic thematic analysis. This process wasn't just about sorting data; it was about deeply understanding their stories. We followed a clear, multi-stage process:

- **Deep Immersion:** We began by thoroughly reading all responses to immerse ourselves in the data, allowing us to grasp the full context of each teacher's experience.
- **Identifying Key Ideas:** Next, we coded the data for recurrent ideas and powerful keywords that teachers used repeatedly, such as "support," "belonging," "stress," and "motivation."

- Building Themes: These codes were then grouped into the major themes that form the core of our results: emotional support, physical environment, collegiality and belonging, and motivation/passion for teaching.
 - Centering Teacher Voices: To ensure our analysis remained grounded in reality, we integrated direct quotations from the teachers, using their own powerful words to illustrate and enrich our interpretation.
 - Connecting to the Bigger Picture: Finally, we triangulated our findings by comparing them with established international research, allowing us to see how these local experiences align with—and enrich—global conversations on teacher well-being.
- This approach allowed us to capture both the unique, individual voices of the educators and the broader, impactful implications of well-being for school culture and leadership.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

When we listened to the 30 teachers in this study, their stories painted a clear and powerful picture of transformation. Their experiences coalesced around four key themes that show how targeted support can revitalize a school's climate: (a) emotional support and stress release, (b) the power of the physical environment, (c) collegiality and belonging, and (d) a renewed sense of motivation. These aren't just abstract concepts; they are the lived realities of educators who began to feel seen, heard, and valued.

Theme 1: Emotional Support and Stress Release

The teachers were clear: the emotional release workshops provided a critical lifeline. But what stood out was that these sessions were about more than just managing stress; they were about feeling validated as people, not just as employees.

One teacher captured this shift perfectly:

"For the first time, I felt that the school cared about my emotions, not only my teaching duties. It was like a weight was lifted, just to be asked how I was truly doing." (Teacher #7)

This sentiment highlights a fundamental need for empathy. When the institution acknowledges the person behind the professional, it becomes a powerful stress reliever in itself. This support also became incredibly practical. Another teacher shared how the workshops provided real-world tools:

"The workshops helped me let go of accumulated stress and gave me new, practical ways to handle daily classroom challenges. I learned to pause and breathe before reacting, which has completely changed my dynamic with difficult students." (Teacher #15)

Here, we see the transition from feeling overwhelmed to feeling empowered. Perhaps the most poignant summary came from a teacher who described the workshops as essential fuel:

"We are constantly giving, giving, giving—to students, to parents, to the curriculum. These workshops felt like the school was giving something back to us. It was fuel for an empty tank." (Teacher #22)

This metaphor gets to the heart of the matter. Teacher well-being isn't a luxury; it's the essential resource that makes sustainable teaching possible.

Theme 2: Physical Environment and Comfort

The renovation of the teachers' lounge might seem like a simple facility upgrade, but the teachers experienced it as something far more profound. It became a sanctuary, a tangible sign that their comfort and need for respite were priorities.

As one teacher described:

"When the staff room was redesigned, I finally felt there was a space for me to breathe and regain my energy between classes. It stopped being a place I avoided and became a place I sought out." (Teacher #3)

This new space did more than just offer a place to sit; it fostered unexpected collaboration. Another teacher noted:

"A comfortable environment makes me want to stay at school even after teaching hours. I now plan lessons there and have spontaneous, helpful conversations with colleagues I'd never spoken to before." (Teacher #19)

Beyond the practical benefits, the change sent a powerful symbolic message. One educator explained:

"The new chair and coffee corner might seem small, but the message was huge: 'You deserve a comfortable place to rest.' It made me feel valued in a way that a yearly bonus never could." (Teacher #14)

This tells us that sometimes, the smallest investments in dignity and comfort can have the greatest returns on morale.

Theme 3: Collegiality and Belonging

The school-wide events and appreciation activities were the catalyst that turned a group of individual educators into a genuine, supportive community. The school's motto of being a "family" started to feel real.

As one teacher shared:

"The social events made us feel like one family, not just employees. We started sharing personal stories, and that built a level of trust that carries over into our work every day." (Teacher #11)

This wasn't just about socializing; it was about building the trust that makes professional collaboration possible. This sense of being valued was also fueled by recognition. Another teacher emphasized how much it mattered to be seen:

"Recognition from the school gave me motivation to continue with more passion. When the principal personally thanked me for my effort on a project, it wasn't just about that project; it made all my hard work feel visible." (Teacher #21)

This shift from isolation to teamwork was clear. As a third teacher put it:

"Now, we have inside jokes, we check in on each other when someone seems stressed. We've become a real team, and that makes the hard days so much easier to bear." (Teacher #29)

This sense of belonging, of being part of a team, doesn't just make the job more pleasant; it builds a collective resilience that helps everyone withstand the pressures of teaching.

Theme 4: Renewed Motivation and Passion for Teaching

Ultimately, the most significant outcome of these initiatives was the rekindling of teachers' passion for their profession. They described reconnecting with the core reasons they entered teaching in the first place.

This reciprocal relationship between support and passion was beautifully expressed:

"I started to love teaching again because I felt the school loved me back. The joy is contagious when I feel supported; I have more positive energy to give to my students." (Teacher #9)

For others, this translated into a restored sense of purpose. One teacher made a critical distinction:

"Motivation comes when I feel valued as a human being, not just as a worker. I'm not just implementing a curriculum anymore, I feel like I'm part of a mission I believe in again." (Teacher #27)

For some, the impact was even deeper, helping them overcome burnout. As one teacher confessed:

"The constant stress had made me cynical. But these changes: the workshops, the lounge, the feeling of being a community, peeled back the layers of burnout. I find myself smiling with my students more, remembering why I wanted to do this in the first place." (Teacher #4)

This reconnection with their idealistic teaching self is perhaps the most powerful testament to the transformative potential of holistic well-being.

5. Discussion

This study shows us that structured well-being initiatives can fundamentally transform teacher motivation and satisfaction, even within the challenging context of an Arab school in East Jerusalem. The four themes we uncovered, emotional support, physical comfort, collegial belonging, and renewed motivation, are deeply interconnected. Together, they create a powerful narrative: when we systematically care for teachers, we don't just improve their job satisfaction; we help them rediscover their professional purpose.

Emotional Support as a Core Resource

Our findings strongly align with existing research (e.g., Yin et al., 2016) on the importance of emotional regulation. However, our study adds a crucial, practical dimension: it shows how proactive, institutionally supported workshops can embed emotional well-being directly into the school's culture. This moves beyond treating stress as an individual problem to solve and instead frames emotional support as a shared, communal resource.

The Profound Role of the Physical Environment

While previous literature has acknowledged the importance of school climate, our research provides a compelling case for the power of modest, low-cost physical improvements. In a resource-constrained environment like East Jerusalem, the dramatic positive impact of renovating the teachers' lounge is

particularly significant. It demonstrates that a thoughtful investment in a physical space can yield enormous returns in morale and a sense of belonging.

How Collegiality and Belonging Fuel Resilience

The emphasis our teachers placed on community events and recognition echoes relational approaches to education. Our contribution is to show that this sense of belonging does more than just prevent burnout—it actively rekindles a teacher's passion for their work. This creates a positive cycle where supportive relationships fuel the energy needed to teach well, which in turn strengthens those very relationships.

Motivation: More Than an Individual Trait

The renewed passion we observed confirms what psychological capital research suggests: that optimism and resilience are key. But our findings push this further, showing that this motivation is not just an internal trait. It is significantly shaped by the school's environment and leadership practices. When teachers feel recognized and supported by their institution, their internal drive to teach well is powerfully reinforced.

Our Contribution to the Wider Conversation

The distinct value of this study lies in its context. By focusing on a private Arab school in East Jerusalem, we show that well-being initiatives are not a one-size-fits-all concept. They are a vital tool for mitigating the unique socio-political and institutional pressures that teachers in this region face. Our work adds a localized, real-world dimension to the global discussion, arguing that teacher well-being must be understood and implemented within specific cultural realities.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrated that structured well-being initiatives emotional release workshops, renovation of staff lounges, and community-building events, significantly improved teacher motivation, emotional engagement, and professional satisfaction in a private Arab school in East Jerusalem. The findings align with international research confirming that teacher well-being is a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional, physical, and social dimensions (Yin, Huang, & Wang, 2016; Kun & Gadanecz, 2022; Viac & Fraser, 2023). However, this research extends the literature by contextualizing well-being practices in Arab schools facing socio-political and institutional pressures. It shows that well-being initiatives are not a peripheral luxury but a central pillar of effective school leadership and teacher resilience (Hascher, Beltman & Mansfield, 2021; Reizer, 2022). By embedding care, recognition, and relational pedagogy into school culture (Daaboul, 2024; Noddings, 2012), teachers can sustain passion for teaching and overcome systemic stressors.

7. Recommendations

For School Leaders and Administrators

Effective leadership is the cornerstone of promoting teacher well-being. School leaders should embed teacher well-being into the strategic vision of the institution by fostering supportive school climates, recognizing teachers' efforts, and ensuring that their voices are heard in decision-making processes. This includes establishing policies that reduce excessive workload, providing professional development opportunities, and creating spaces—both physical and emotional—that allow teachers to recharge and build collegial relationships. A leadership approach grounded in empathy and care strengthens teacher motivation and enhances their sense of belonging.

For Policymakers and Educational Authorities

Educational policy must recognize teacher well-being as a structural necessity, not a luxury. Governmental and regional educational authorities should design frameworks that prioritize teacher well-being by incorporating it into educational standards, funding allocations, and evaluation systems. This involves supporting schools with adequate resources, promoting equity across different communities, and ensuring that teachers in marginalized or politically complex contexts, such as East Jerusalem, receive targeted support. By embedding well-being indicators into educational policy, authorities can help sustain teacher motivation and improve overall educational outcomes.

For Teachers Themselves

Teachers play an active role in nurturing their own well-being. While institutional support is crucial, teachers are encouraged to engage in reflective practices that promote resilience, such as peer collaboration, emotion

regulation strategies, and participation in well-being initiatives (e.g., workshops, mindfulness, or peer mentoring). Building psychological capital, hope, optimism, and resilience empowers teachers to sustain motivation and cultivate meaningful connections with their students. Teachers who prioritize self-care and professional balance are better equipped to transform challenges into opportunities for growth.

For Parents and the Wider School Community

Parents and communities are essential partners in sustaining teacher well-being. Strengthening partnerships between schools and parents enhances mutual respect, trust, and collaboration. Parents can support teachers by recognizing their emotional and professional efforts, actively participating in school life, and fostering respectful dialogue. Such relational engagement helps teachers feel valued not only within the school but also in the broader community, reinforcing their passion for teaching and sustaining a culture of love and respect in education.

8. Implications for Future Research

This study points toward two critical avenues for future research. First, a longitudinal investigation across a broader range of schools is necessary to determine the long-term sustainability of these well-being benefits. Second, and most compellingly, establishing a clear, causal link between teacher well-being initiatives and improved student outcomes would provide invaluable evidence for educational policymakers, transforming teacher support from a peripheral concern into a foundational priority.

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