

The Influence of Social Emotional Learning and Coping on Teacher Well-Being: An Application of Positive Psychology

Zhang Guoying¹, Azlina Abu Bakar², Taufiqnur Selamat³

¹Faculty of Human Development, Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI), Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia
Email: 82853704[at]qq.com
01115887588

²Faculty of Human Development, Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI), Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia
Corresponding Author Email: azlina.ab[at]fpm.upsi.edu.my
01129419728

³Cocurricular Unit, Student Activity Centre, University of Technology MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia
Email: taufiqnur[at]uitm.edu.my

Abstract: *Positive psychology emphasizes well-being leading to a meaningful life with personal development. Teacher's well-being (TWB) plays an essential role in quality of teaching and students' achievements. In this study, the objective was to determine the influence of social and emotional learning and coping as the predictors to TWB among high middle school teachers. Teacher Well-being Scale, SEL Scale for Teacher and Brief COPE and were adopted as instruments for this quantitative research in Yinchuan. A cross-sectional study was conducted to test the hypothesis of the study. Survey data were gathered from 12 school teachers then analyzed by SPSS and Smart-PLS. Findings yielded that teachers' social and emotional learning ($t=4.779, p<0.01$) and coping ($t=26.356, p<0.01$) have positive relationships on the TWB among high middle school teachers in this region.*

Keywords: Teacher's well-being, social and emotional learning, coping, positive psychology

1. Introduction

Teacher's well-being refers to teachers' positive evaluations of working environment as well as the healthy function in their work (Collie, 2015). Currently, teacher well-being (TWB) is a curial issue both for schools and future society (Bardach, 2022). It is related to not only teaching effectiveness but also governance in education (Hascher, 2021). However, situation about teacher well-being is not so optimistic in general. (Herman et al. 2018). Therefore, from a positive psychological perspective it is very necessary to veer away from listing the factors undermine teachers' well-being to digging out teachers' individual personal traits holding upon their psychological well-being. Admittedly, the proliferation of positive psychology in the past ten years has generated a lot of valuable well-being related topics. TWB has been studied in multiple overlapping domains. However, there has been relatively little attention to the influence of social and emotional learning, coping on TWB of high middle school teachers.

In this study, the researchers believe paying attention to the positive aspects of teachers is more conducive to a deep understanding of TWB nature. Positive psychology is related to positive education. We should emphasize the positive aspects based on the theory of positive psychology research. The advent of positive psychology can be traced back to Martin E. P. Seligman's Presidential Address in 1998. Positive psychology explores and increases the positive aspects of life through scientific methods, especially hoping to find factors that increase happiness (Seligman, 2011). Seligman pointed out that so-called negative psychology had emphasized too much on curing

psychological problems or mental illness and had largely neglected the missions of helping people to lead more productive and fulfilling lives. Instead, positive psychology calls for studies about advantages of positive emotions, the positive qualities, and better development of human beings. Ever since then positive psychology has been a revolution in the field of psychology.

Positive psychology believes that psychology should not only study injuries, defects and injuries, but also study strength and excellent qualities; treatment is not only to repair and make up for injuries, defects, but also to discover potential and strength of humans themselves. Specifically in terms of research objects, the research of positive psychology is divided into three levels: 1. on the subjective level, it is the study of positive subjective experiences, satisfaction and happiness (for the past), the flow and happiness (to the present), hope and optimism (for the future); 2. At the personal level, it is the study of positive personal traits: the ability to love, the ability to work, courage, interpersonal skills, the sensibility of beauty, perseverance, tolerance, creativity, and so on.

The concept of social and emotional learning (SEL) comes from Goleman. Coleman was one of the co-founders of CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning) which is an international organization provides guideline and high-quality resource for researchers or practitioners in the field of education in a variety of districts and communities. SEL aims to incorporate social and emotional skills and concepts into general education (Rebecca J. Collie, 2012). So far, SEL has gained a wide range of recognition across the world and the ample

Volume 12 Issue 11, November 2023

www.ijsr.net

Licensed Under Creative Commons Attribution CC BY

research makes SEL an important concept in discussing issues about personality traits and education quality. Very little research has been conducted to identify positive function and outcomes of social and emotional learning for teachers, despite some studies supported the positive impact of SEL on students. (Maria.S. Poulou, 2017). Coping is the cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses adopted by individuals in problem solving process in their lives. Coping behaviors are not limited to the concept of successful endeavors but also are purposeful attempts to combat stressful events. In this study, the researcher takes the most widely accepted definition of coping which described coping as the ongoing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific demands (external and internal) (Chow 2021). They also presented effective ways of managing stress including accepting, avoiding, tolerating, or minimizing the stressors.

Although scholars hold different views on the concept of subjective feelings of happiness, from the overall perspective of the basic concept of positive psychology, happiness or well-being contains at least two aspects: one is the emotional component, that is, the experience of positive emotions such as satisfaction and self-confidence. The other is cognitive evaluation of satisfaction in all aspects of life. At the personal level and subjective level, positive psychology mainly focuses on: positive emotional experience and positive personality traits, and this is what the current study tries to reveal. As a practical study guided by the theory of positive psychology, this study briefly states the status quo and proposes corresponding research questions of teacher well-being among high middle school teacher in Yinchuan of northwest China.

1.1 Research objectives

- 1) To determine the level of SEL and coping and TWB of this region.
- 2) To test the reliability and validity of the scales among the sample.
- 3) To examine the influence of SEL and coping toward teacher's well-being among high middle school teachers in Yinchuan.

2. Material and Methods

Teacher Well-being Scale (Collie, 2015), SEL Scale for Teacher (Brackett, 2012) and Brief COPE (Carver, 1997) were employed in this study. In order to make sure all subgroups are in a well-defined probability distribution in this study, the researcher chose simple random sampling. This was a quantitative type of study, and SPSS & PLS-SEM was employed to analyses data. Considering the Krejcie & Morgan sample size table, high school Chinese teachers were selected randomly in this region (Yinchuan) as the subjects of the research. Finally, 458 valid were collected with the response rate of 91%. According to Fincham (2008), response rates approximating sixty (60%) and above is acceptable rate for most researches. Response rates above 60% should be the bottom line for researchers and certainly are the basic expectation of editors of most journals. For a survey research, a response rate above 80% is expected (Fincham,

2008). Therefore, the sample size fully meets standards for a survey research.

3. Results

3.1 The level of SE and TWB

Based on the KS test, this is a normal distribution. SPSS and SEM were performed in the data analysis (n = 458). Table 1 is the descriptive statistics of variables SEL and COP. Data revealed the SEL and COP are both moderate levels among high middle school teachers.

As for a 7-likert scale, 4.85 is not so high on TWB. Besides the figures in the table, the mode of each variable was also tested. All the three variables showed the same mode of value 4, which is just moderate in a 7-likert scale. Therefore, most teacher can perceive above middle level well-being (from the value of mean 4.85 and mode of 4.00). Although the overall level is not particularly high, 4 is a little above the median on a seven-point scale. Similarly, most people have a moderate level of SEL and coping with the mode of 4 respectively.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of SEL and coping and TWB

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
SEL	458	4.65	1.08	1.31	6.75
COP	458	3.79	0.73	2.07	5.86
TWB	458	4.85	0.57	2.42	5.33

Note: SEL=social and emotional learning; COP=coping; TWB= teacher's well-being

3.2 Reliability and validity of the scales

For research objective 2, we can refer to the table 2.

Based on the data, the scales have qualified reliability and validity. Coping scale revealed best reliability and validity among the three. For coping scale with all items, Composite reliability (CR) = 0.989; Cronbach's alpha= 0.988; AVE=0.759; in which the factor loading range from 0.909 to 0.785. TWB scale also yielded reliability and validity (CR)=0.926, Cronbach's alpha= 0.939, AVE= 0.513., almost all factor loading value were above 0.7. As for Social Emotional Learning Scale with all items, Composite reliability (CR) = 0.860; Cronbach's alpha= 0.888; AVE=0.412; in which the factor loading range from 0.909 to 0.785.

With all items in the inventory tested, the factor loading of very few items was relatively low, which affected the overall validity. Therefore, the researcher decided to delete some factors, according to Hair's point of view, items with outer loading below 0.70 should be considered removal. But we also need to combine AVE and CR (in table 2). According to Hair (2016), items should be deleted only when the AVE is significantly improved. "If AVE and CR values are found adequate after removal of items less than those 0.40-0.70, then those items with factor loading between 0.40 to 0.70 may not be removed." (Hair, 2006). After comprehensive consideration, the researchers decided to delete several items with very low factor loadings first. After comparative observation, it was found that this is indeed the case. Therefore, after repeated trials, these items with factor loading below the recommended standard of 0.6 were deleted.

These items are SEL1, 2, 11; TWB 1, 2. (SEL1=0.489, SEL2=0.579, SEL11=0.212, WB1=0.131, WB2=0.597). Therefore, AVE improved after these items were removed. Reliability table with deleted items was shown in the table below. Cronbach's alpha was all above 0.87, which indicate a high level of reliability. AVE are all above 0.5.

Table 2: Reliability and convergent validity

	Cronbach's alpha	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE
COP	0.988	0.989	0.989	0.759
SEL	0.871	0.878	0.898	0.501
TWB	0.94	0.948	0.947	0.561

3.3 The relationship between SEL, COP and TWB

Table 3: Result of Bootstrapping

Path coefficient	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
			(STDEV)		
SEL -> TWB	0.177	0.177	0.037	4.779	0.000
COP -> TWB	0.692	0.692	0.026	26.356	0.000

Result of bootstrapping reported the relationship between TWB (Teacher well-being) and SEL and coping (Table 3).

As shown in Table 3, the path coefficients and significance results showed influence of SEL and coping toward TWB clearly. All P Values were less than 0.01. From these results, it is clear that coping learning, social learning and emotional learning are all significantly related to the well-being of the teachers in the sample. This was because each P value was less than 0.05 and each value of the t-statistic was more than 1.96. Specifically, questions were proved with predictors SEL (t=4.779, p<0.01), and coping (t=26.356, p<0.01).

Result of relationships can also be presented by Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Based on the r² value of above 0.7, 0.4 or 0.1, the analysis can be interpreted as a high, moderate, or low correlation as proposed by Schober (2018). The research results indicated that there was a positive significance in the data analysis. The r value was 0.497** (SEL and teacher well-being) and 0.417** (COP and teacher well-being). To be specific, as for the correlation between TWB and SEL, the 49.7 percent at 99 percent confident interval showed a moderate relationship. The same rule applied to coping and TWB.

4. Discussion

This article is part of a larger study. The ultimate purpose is to find the profile of teacher well-being among Chinese high middle school teachers. Hopefully this study can help to develop a formula directly for maximizing TWB in this specific area of the sample. The researchers assume that the key to TWB lies in the coordination between teachers' s external expectations and their internal values, actions and emotions. Successful coping can lead to more positive emotional outcomes.

In order to achieve the ultimate objective and explore answers to research questions, they decided to examine the influence of social and emotional learning and coping on TWB and to determine whether the presence or absence of it can affect TWB. The research purpose of this paper is to disclose TWB study from a positive approach by examining the impact of teachers' personal feelings or abilities or behaviors.

Result of bootstrapping uncover the relationship between social and emotional learning and teacher well-being (t=4.779, p<0.001). As expected, the results of this research

show that social and emotional learning (SEL) significantly and positively affects teacher well-being (TWB), indicating that the higher perceived level of social and emotional learning leads to higher level of teacher well-being. The finding is that social and emotional learning and teacher well-being were significantly positively correlated, which is consistent with findings in literature indicates that SEL interventions and teacher well-being were associate. A quantitative study (Sandilos, 2023) which explored associations between classroom implementation of a universal SEL program, teachers' emotional well-being, and teacher-student interactions revealed an interaction between social and emotional learning and teacher emotional well-being.

Although there has been an army of research regarding SEL for students, study in support of the SEL of teachers is surprisingly scant. In the past two decades, SEL research has mainly focused on students' social and emotional competencies and other contextual factors (Sandilos, 2023). Little research to date has explored perceptions of teachers' own social and emotional function. This study proved that Chinese high middle teachers are more likely to perceive teacher well-being when they have a better coping style. Besides this finding can encourage teachers to get access to the SEL programs more actively, rather than just waiting passively or being involved without any real interests.

The existing literature of coping is sparse and fragmented, meaning that the focus is scattered. The evidence from this study suggests that coping could significantly affect teacher well-being. This was because the value of P values was less than 0.01 and the value of the t-statistic was more than 1.96 for three variables. (t=26.356, p<0.01) This finding demonstrates the important roles of coping in determining well-being among the sample. The present findings are consistent with some studies conducted in other contexts (Gul, F., 2015; Naskar, N., & Thomas, N. 2021; Zewude, G. T., 2021). When it comes to teacher well-being, the importance of finding the most suitable coping strategies for teachers in different situations, which means to add problem-focused coping strategies, should be acknowledged to possibly increase teachers' well-being.

The present study confirmed SEL and coping as predictors toward TWB in high middle school teachers. Furthermore, it is also a practical clue on the well-being of teachers using positive psychology theory (Seligman, 2011). Therefore,

examining both constructs is essential for understanding TWB.

5. Conclusion

This study attempts to promote social and emotional learning and coping with concern for TWB. Based on the finding, these two constructs both contribute to teacher-well-being. The researchers hope this paper can be a reference for future scholars to portray the profile of teacher well-being.

References

- [1] Bardach, L., Klassen, R. M., & Perry, N. E. (2022). Teachers' psychological characteristics: Do they matter for teacher effectiveness, teachers' well-being, retention, and interpersonal relations? An integrative review. *Educational Psychology Review*, 34(1), 259-300.
- [2] Brackett, M., Reyes, M., Rivers, S., Elbertson, N., & Salobery, P. (2012). Assessing Teacher's beliefs about social and emotional learning. *Journal of Psychoeducation of Assessment*, 30(3), 219-236
- [3] Carver, C. S. (1997). You want to measure coping but your protocol's too long: Consider the brief COPE. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 4(1), 92-100.
- [4] Collie, R. J., Shapka, J. D., & Perry, N. E. (2012). School climate and social-emotional learning: Predicting teacher stress, job satisfaction, and teaching efficacy. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 104, 1189-1204.
- [5] Collie, R. J., Shapka, J. D., Perry, N. E., & Martin, A. J. (2015). Teacher well-being: Exploring its components and a practice-oriented scale. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 33(8), 744-756.
- [6] Corcoran, R.P., O'Flaherty, J. (2022). Social and emotional learning in teacher preparation: Pre-service teacher well-being. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, (110).
- [7] Darling-Hammond, L., & Haselkom, D. (2019). Reforming teaching: Are we missing the boat? *Education Week*, 28(21), 30-36.
- [8] Fincham, J. E. Response rates and responsiveness for surveys, standards, and the Journal. *American journal of pharmaceutical education*, 2008;72(2).43.
- [9] Gul, F., & Dawood, S. (2015). Coping Strategies and Psychological Wellbeing of Older Adults in Relation to Education. *Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 2(2), 44-54.
- [10] Herman, K. C., Hickmon-Rosa, J. E., & Reinke, W. M. (2018). Empirically derived profiles of teacher stress, burnout, self-efficacy, and coping and associated student outcomes. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 20, 90-100.
- [11] Maria S. Poulou. (2017). Social and Emotional Learning and Teacher-Student Relationships: Preschool Teachers' and Students' Perceptions. *Early Childhood Educ J* (2017) 45:427 -435. doi 10.1007/s10643-016-0800-3.
- [12] Hascher, T.; Waber, J. (2021). Teacher well-being: A systematic review of the research literature from the year 2000-2019. *Educ. Res. Rev.* 34, 100411.
- [13] Sandilos, L. E., Neugebauer, S. R., DiPerna, J. C., Hart, S. C., & Lei, P. (2023). Social-Emotional learning for whom? Implications of a universal SEL program and teacher well-being for teachers' interactions with students. *School Mental Health*, 15(1), 190-201.
- [14] Schober, P., Boer, C., & Schwarte, L. A. (2018). Correlation coefficients: appropriate use and interpretation. *Anesthesia & analgesia*, 126(5), 1763-1768.
- [15] Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- [16] Zewude, G. T., & Hercz, M. (2021). Psychological capital and teacher well-being: the mediation role of coping with stress. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 10(3), 1227-1245.