

Factors Influencing the Well-Being of Special Education Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The progress of special education teachers' students is influenced by their well-being, which is crucial to their mental health. It is vital to comprehend teacher well-being and its effects on the teaching and learning nexus in this setting where these difficulties are interrelated. This study sought to learn more about the psychological factors influencing special education teachers' well-being in Banjarmasin. We evaluated how work engagement and emotional intelligence (EI) relate to teachers' well-being. The latest study included 496 special education instructors in total. The findings revealed that Emotional Intelligence and work engagement were positively correlated with special education teachers' well-being and (2) work engagement acted as a negotiator between EI and well-being. It is suggested that politicians and educational institutions take these measures to support the well-being of special education instructors.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, Special education teachers, Education, Work engagement

1. INTRODUCTION

High levels of stress in the emotionally intense profession of teaching may contribute to work dissatisfaction, mental illnesses, and diminished well-being. (Chang 2009). According to Keller et al 2014 teachers typically deal with difficult events that may have an impact on their productivity at work (Brackett et al 2010). The threshold of mental health, and professional identity (Wang, 2017) are all impacted by well-being, making it a crucial factor in reducing the purpose of teachers to leave their careers (Li, 2013). As a result, it has become a crucial benchmark for gauging the consistency of the teaching team to some extent and a crucial component of teachers' career growth. (Lam, 2019). Additionally, it has been discovered that teacher well-being in schools is associated with student achievement (Briner and Dewberry, 2007), suggesting that enhancing staff well-being offers advantages for both the success of the business and the employees individually.

Every day, special education teachers deal with a diverse set of pupils with physical and mental problems who need personalised care. Teachers must give personalised education plans and address student concerns in accordance with each student's particular differences in regard to their daily teaching and assignment grading (Conley & You, 2017). As a result of carrying these burdens, special education teachers' mental health conditions have drawn increasing attention, particularly in relation to their subjective well-being (Fu et al., 2022). This is because these problems not only have an influence on the attribute of life but also have an immediate impact on the attribute of special education. Prior research has revealed that special education teachers have poor psychological illness and that other professionals are more likely to notice mental health symptoms than they are. (Zhang et al 2020).

Additionally, teachers are required to support the development of the administrative operations of schools. Their mental and physical health is greatly strained by their employment, which places them under more stress than typical teachers. Teachers of special education are more likely to experience work stress, which will impair their productivity and motivation. Higher relationships between psychological status and some aspects, like gender and prior teaching experience, and also psychological factors, like teaching effectiveness, have been discovered. (Bhave & Glomb, 2016). Due to their unique physical and mental traits, individuals with intellectual disabilities require extra attention from special education teachers in order to learn speech expression, social behaviours, physical functioning, and life adaption. (Sun et al 2019).

Therefore, in order to provide children with the best knowledge, such teachers must pay closer focus on the physical and psychological illness of the students, act swiftly to provide aid, and fully demonstrate professional approaches. Additionally, because it is widely believed that instructors cannot display bad feelings at random, their emotions are repressed. Teachers carry a heavier emotional burden when there aren't adequate outlets for release. Additionally, administrators must work with and support special education instructors. The basic concepts underlying "social support" are these interpersonal mechanisms of cooperation and interpersonal engagement. (Fu et al 2022). Since teachers need the social support of administrators, associated professional staff, and parents, it is challenging for them to operate as autonomously as regular teachers.

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite current research advancements in assessing special education teachers' well-being and examining the connection between their EI, work engagement, and well-being, there are still some voids in the body of knowledge. In the present research, we looked at the well-being of special education instructors and also the connections between them, focusing in particular on the influence of work engagement on EI and well-being.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

For the purpose of a questionnaire design, Ju et al. (2015) split instructors' social support into 3 aspects. (1) Emotional support applies to addressing temperamental issues and offering support through a variety of means to elicit positive feelings in special education teachers. (2) Substantial alludes to the time provided through different substrates to resolve the issues of special education teachers, like the administrative units of schools providing help and support. (3) Informational support entails the expertise and facilitation through diverse kinds of support to enable teachers in solving associated issues.

According to Jeong et al. (2020), a person's general opinions toward their job constitute their level of well-being. Employees who are in good health have positive attitudes, whereas those who are in bad health exhibit negative attitudes. Work that is cognitively demanding, offers just rewards, and has a supportive workplace culture are all factors that contribute to well-being.

According to Wu et al. (2020), the degree to which a person and/or the majority of employees feel that their work is fulfilling depends on factors including pay, raises, work environment, hours worked, type of work, chances for advancement, interactions, and management.

According to Ilies et al. (2020), when employees evaluate their outcomes to those of other individuals in the same organization, they judge their perceived job dedication and rewards; a more equal outcome will result in stronger sentiments of well-being.

Greater professional pressure is placed on special education instructors in the classroom (Shyman, 2011), particularly for those in China with distinct curricular requirements, evaluation, administration, and other factors. Special education schools continue to be the primary educational institutions for children with disabilities in China, despite being inspired by the inclusive education philosophy popular in western nations. In China's special education schools in 2019, there were 62,400 special education teachers working with 28,87% of pupils with impairments.

EI is the capacity of the people to recognize her own emotions and also the others, leading to the development of positive interpersonal relationships. Emotional Intelligence can be viewed as an internal resource as per COR Theory, which could successfully describe the asymmetric correlation between EI and its variables. When teaching kids, teachers go through a wide spectrum of emotions, both good and bad. (Brackett and Katulak, 2010).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants and procedure

To enlist their assistance in our study, we got in touch with the Banjarmasin-based special education teachers' association. The completed survey forms were to be placed inside the sealed envelopes and returned to us by the respondents.

The relevant sample size for the analysis is 496. The characteristics that were observed were EI, work engagement, and general well-being. Each observation variable's value was based on the average score for each dimension. Using the PROCESS SPSS computer tool, the mediation model was tested to see if job engagement mediates EI and overall well-being.

3.2 Emotional Intelligence Scale

The EI scale created by Wong and Law was used in this investigation (2002). It is a 5-point Likert-type scale, varying from "completely inconsistent" to "extremely consistent" (for example, "I have a good knowledge of my emotions." and "I completely comprehend my emotions. The EI increases as the score rises.

3.3 Work Engagement Scale

This study has made use of the Work Engagement Scale created by Schaufeli et al. (2002). Informants are asked to rate how often they encounter these feelings on a 5-point Likert scale varying from "completely inconsistent" to "extremely constant." The level of work input increases as the score does.

3.4 General Well-Being Scale

Six factors—energy, contentment and interest in life, sad or glad mood, relaxation, and tension—are among the 18 items on the revised scale, which also includes six more factors. On a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from "totally inconsistent" to "very continuous," informants are asked to rate how frequently they experience these emotions. The back scorecard has nine questions on it. The general state of well-being increases as the score rises. Figure 3.1 depicts the study's theoretical framework.

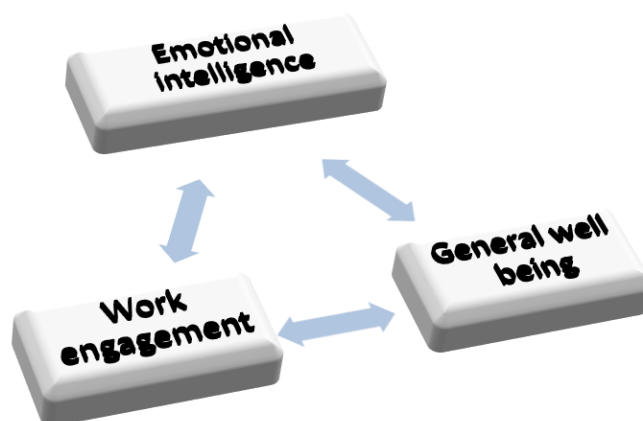


Fig.3.1. Theoretical model

4. RESULTS

4.1 Statistical results and interpretation

21.77% of men and 78.23% of women made up the sample. In the sample, there were 22.18% of participants with less than three years of teaching experience, 12.5% with three to five years of experience, 16.33% with six to ten years of experience, and the remaining participants (48.99%) with great levels of expertise.

The reliability of the survey is evaluated using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. Table 4.1 and figure 4.1 displays each questionnaire's factor-loading range and reliability statistics.

TABLE 4.1. Variable's reliability and factor loading.

| VARIABLE | CRON BACH ALPHA | FACTOR LOADING |
|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Emotional intelligence | 0.955 | 0.649 – 0.851 |
| Work engagement | 0.965 | 0.643 – 0.884 |
| General well being | 0.885 | 0.396 – 0.769 |

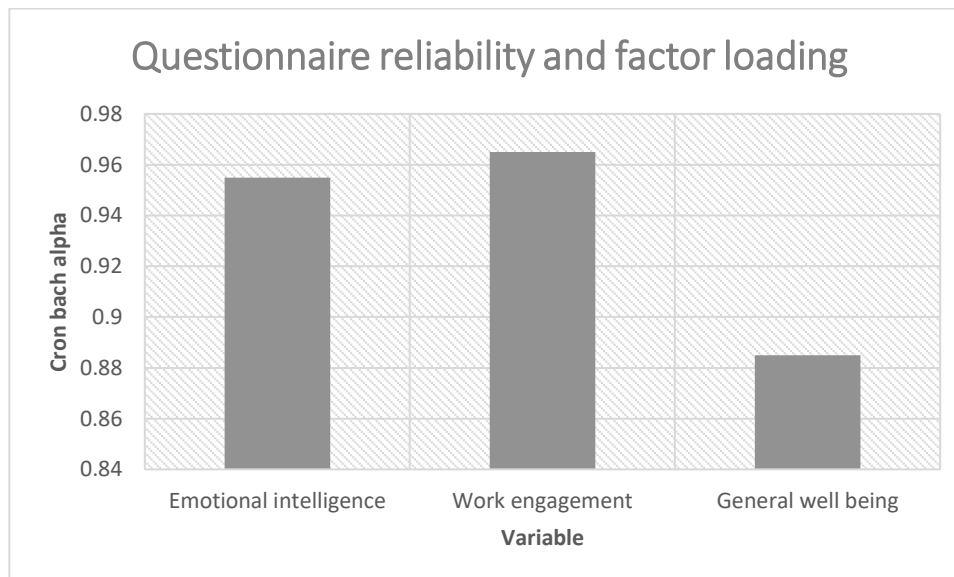


Fig.4.1. Variable's reliability and factor loading.

4.2 Emotional Intelligence, work engagement, and general well-being correlations

The study also looked into how each variable related to the others.

TABLE 4.2. Statistics variables for descriptive and correlated data.

| VARIABLE | M ± SD | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|------------------------|---------------|--------|--------|---|
| Emotional intelligence | 44.27 ± 6.31 | 1 | | |
| Work engagement | 53.30 ± 12.86 | 0.25** | 1 | |
| General well being | 65.75 ± 12.45 | 0.03** | 0.13** | 1 |

** p < 0.01

Emotional Intelligence, work engagement, and general well-being all had positive connection coefficients, as seen in Table 2. EI was substantially correlated with both general well-being ($r = 0.03$; $p < 0.01$) and work engagement ($r = 0.25$; $p < 0.01$). In the meantime, there was a strong connection between work engagement and overall well-being ($r = 0.13$, $p < 0.01$). So, it can be concluded that general well-being increases with EI or work involvement.

5. DISCUSSION

An investigation of the elements was conducted to comprehend the functions of EI and job engagement Lestari & Sawitri (2017). This research on special education teachers revealed that high EI is what drives instructors' high spirits and level of involvement at work. According to special education teachers who had high EI scores, they thought they were doing well at self-relevant information management, optimism/mood regulation, and emotion repair on their own as well as moderately well at controlling the emotions of others, who would exert better self-control at work and feel less distress (Platsidou, 2010). Engagement in work at facilities and the promotion of professionals' well-being depend on strong traits of EI. By skillfully managing their emotions, people with EI have the drive and capacity to feel good. Teachers of special education may become more engaged in their profession if they have pleasant emotional experiences and are resilient. that special education instructors' employee engagement is influenced by their EI. Teachers' steadfast efforts to develop effective teaching strategies for their pupils, and a desire to assist the students are signs of high work engagement. High EI special education teachers are motivated to support disabled children so they can become independent and have empathy for the kids since they can relate to their struggles. Additionally, they can deal with children's inappropriate behaviour and prevent unpleasant emotions from developing.

Banjarmasin special education instructors report higher subjective well-being. This is likely due to their strong ability to perceive emotions. The investigations shown that improving emotional and personal well-being requires the development of the capacity to comprehend, and control one's own emotions and also those of others. That is, having high EI results in being happier. EI will support a person's ability to manage their emotions and social skills. Emotional intelligence (EI) may affect or moderate how people manage and express their emotions.

6. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the major impact of special education teachers' professional engagement on their well-being and the mediation impact of emotional intelligence, incorporating ideas from positive psychology and the affective events paradigm. For instance, emotional labour may directly and positively affect self-esteem, psychological well-being, physical and mental health, and self-affirmation. Since special education teachers are a unique group in the profession and it is difficult for them to work as independently as regular teachers, this research could give special education administrators useful information to help them enhance teachers' well-being in the workplace.

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