SHORT ARTICLE

Predictors of psychological well-being among high school teachers: A cross-sectional study from Southern India

Chinthana Rajesh[1], Lena Ashok[2], Chythra R. Rao[3], Veena G. Kamath[4], Asha Kamath[5], Varalakshmi Chandra Sekaran[6]

[1]Research scholar, Prasanna School Of Public Health, Manipal Academy Of Higher Education, Manipal, Karnataka, India; [2]Associate Professor, Coordinator MSW, Prasanna School Of Public health, Manipal Academy Of Higher Education, Manipal, Karnataka, India; [3]Associate Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Kasturba Medical College, Manipal, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal, Karnataka, India; [4]Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Kasturba Medical College, Manipal, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal, Karnataka, India; [5]Head, Department of Data Sciences, Prasanna School Of Public health, Manipal Academy Of Higher Education, Manipal, Karnataka, India; [6]Lecturer, Community Medicine, Melaka Manipal Medical College, Manipal, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal, Karnataka, India

| Abstract | Introduction | Methodology | Results | Conclusion | References | Citation | Tables / Figures |

Corresponding Author

Dr Lena Ashok, Associate Professor, Coordinator MSW, Prasanna School Of Public health, Manipal Academy Of Higher Education, Manipal, Karnataka, India
E Mail ID: lena.ashok@manipal.edu

Citation

Article Cycle

Abstract

Background: Well-being is increasingly emerging as an important determinant of teacher effectiveness. **Aim and objective:** To assess the predictors of psychological well-being in Southern India. **Settings and design:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among 460 high school teachers from government and private schools in Udupi district. **Methods and materials:** Ryff's psychological well-being scale (1989) was used. **Statistical analysis used:** Predictors were identified using logistic regression and $p < 0.05$ was considered to be statistically significant **Results:** Autonomy, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life and self-acceptance emerged as predictors of psychological well-being. Age predicted the subdomain of autonomy; number and age of children predicted environmental mastery; gender, monthly income and travelling time of teachers predicted the subdomain of self-acceptance among teachers. **Conclusion:** Teachers are an important resource whose psychological well-being has not received the attention it is due. An intervention program designed to fit their felt needs may be a step in the right direction.

Keywords

Introduction

Teachers are the prominent in-school factors contributing to student progress, continuous and comprehensive learning, and academic performance. Psychologically well-adjusted teachers can provide students with more insightful and reflective learning. It is being identified that teachers with poor health and well-being, experience high levels of stress. It alludes that better health and well-being of teachers would result in creative,

challenging and effective mentors, resulting in improved educational outcomes.(1)Studies showed that the existing literature primarily focuses on the negative influences related to teachers' work and a few identified a range of issues related to teacher well-being, work-life support and social-emotional competence.(2) There is a dearth of studies in the realm of professional and personal well-being among high school teachers.(3)Hence this study attempts to fill a research gap by engaging in a focused analysis of secondary school teachers' well-being.

Aims & Objectives

To look at the predictors of psychological well-being among high school teachers with an emphasis on gender perspectives.

Material & Methods

The study was conducted in Udupi and Karkala blocks which are administrative areas under Udupi district in coastal Karnataka of Southern India. There were a total of five educational blocks in Udupi district as per State Education Board of Karnataka. The district included a total of 2003 high school teachers from a total of 162 government and 93 private schools. The two educational blocks were selected based on convenience sampling and it constituted 57 government and 48 private schools respectively. Each school was considered as a cluster. Primary data collection was conducted between March 2019 and November 2019. The schools were sampled using multistage stratified sampling established on population distributed through government, private, rural and urban areas. The sampling frame comprised of high school teachers who taught core subjects (Kannada, English, Hindi, Sanskrit, Mathematics, Social science and Science) in the high schools of Udupi District. The list of schools and the list of teachers teaching core subjects were prepared. From this list, schools/clusters were randomly selected from four different strata to achieve the sample size.

A total of 460 eligible teachers who taught core subjects in the high schools of   Udupi district of whom teachers from 57 schools including 366 females and 94 males were contacted and consented to participate and provided data. The participants were approached at their schools at a time convenient to them. Informed consent from teachers was obtained. They were requested to complete the self-administered questionnaires confidentially (Figure 1).

Institutional ethics committee approval (IEC 59/2019) and approval of the Education Department was obtained.

Measures

The study included a socio-demographic proforma and Ryff's Psychological well- being scale following permission from the authors.(4) Respondents rated themselves on a six point scale ranging from 1=Strongly disagree to 6=Strongly agree. Higher scores implied high psychological well-being.

Statistical methods

The six domains of the scale were collated into a total attitude domain. Categorization of the raw scores was done using percentiles. Descriptive analysis and stepwise logistic regression to identify predictors were done using SPSS version 15.0. Univariate analysis was done using Chi-square test. The significance level was set at p<0.05.

Results

A total of 366 female and 94 male teachers participated and a majority (73.7%) were from rural areas and (85.7%) were Hindus. About 34.8% were in the age group above 40 years and 45.5% taught core subjects and majority of them taught at Government schools (68.9%). Nuclear families predominated (59.1%) and 80.9% were married with at least 3 children (46.8%) with 1/3rd of them (31.4%) having children between 5-10 years. Less than half of the participants (46.1%) travelled for less than half an hour to their workplace. A major portion of the participants (56.6%) had 6-25 years' teaching experience. The majority (71.3%) had additional responsibilities to perform and 51.7% felt that they had been overworking.

Age and gender of the teachers, number and age of their children, monthly income, travel time to work was found to be significant on univariate analysis and were adjusted on multivariate analysis. Of them, the age of the teacher emerged as a predictor of autonomy on multivariate analysis. For environmental mastery, the predictor that emerged was the number of children. Predictors of self-acceptance included gender, monthly income and travel time to work as major predictors. (Table 2).

The domains that predicted psychological well-being included autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, positive relations and purpose in life. There was reduced likelihood of having poor autonomy (AOR 0.080, 95% CI .032-0.197), p<0.0001), personal growth (AOR 0.336, 95 % CI

0.120-0.943, p=0.038), self-acceptance (AOR 0.178, 95% CI 0.061-0.521. p=0.002) positive relations (AOR 0.206, 95% CI 0.075=0.562. p=0.002) and purpose in life (AOR 0.089, 95% CI 0.034-0.231. p<0.0001) among teachers. An increase in all of these protective factors reduces the likelihood of having poor psychological well-being of teachers.

Discussion

The current study explored the predictors of psychological well-being of teachers assessed in the secondary school setting. The empirical results of this study showed that age had a significant effect on the autonomy of the teachers. In comparison with those teachers who were aged above 40 years, those who were aged 30-35 years had a higher likelihood of having poor autonomy. A study carried out by Huppert[5] reported a u-shaped relationship between age and well-being. They observed that middle-aged individuals tended to have lower well-being scores than younger and the older people.

The present study found a significant association between the number of children of the teachers with their psychological well-being. According to the two nationally representative surveys, the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) and the Understanding Society Survey (USS), reported that not only the number of children but rather the quality of the relationship between the child and their parents influenced parental psychological well-being.[6]

The present study found a significant association between the state of psychological well-being of teachers and the age of their children. Teachers with children in the age group of 2-5 years, experienced poor personal growth in comparison with those who had children in the age group above 15 years. In comparison to the present study, a study conducted among school teachers in Malaysia did not report any significant association between the age of children and the experience of their role confusion.[7] This was in contrast to the study from Bangalore, India conducted among working women who were sampled from industrial, school and hospital settings; where the age of the children was found to be positively correlated with work-life balance issues.[8]

The current study revealed that psychological well-being had a significant role to play on the lives of female teachers when compared with their male counterparts. Female teachers assumed more self-acceptance than male teachers. Role of gender as a demographic variable with psychological well-being has been previously established. In comparison with the present study, no gender differences were found in the psychological well-being of teachers in the studies conducted by Kittel & Leynen[9] in Belgium.

Regarding the commuting time of the teachers to their workplace, the present study found that travel time to work predicted psychological well-being of teachers. Those who travelled between 30 minutes to about an hour had less likelihood of having poor self-acceptance in comparison with those who travelled more than two hours. This finding is comparable to a study conducted in Mumbai and Pune [10]

The result of the current study was a confirmation of the role of autonomy, purpose in life, positive relation with others, personal growth and self-acceptance in influencing psychological well-being among teachers. Results showed that an increase in these protective factors increased the level of psychological wellbeing among teachers.

Conclusion

The age of teachers predicted the subdomain of autonomy; number and age of children predicted environmental mastery; gender, monthly income and travelling time of teachers predicted the subdomain of self-acceptance among teachers. An intervention program designed to fit their felt needs may be a step in the right direction.

Recommendation

Empowering school authorities, head-teachers and teachers in this measure and giving a partnership role in their development as a whole could be a constructive way of bettering well-being. Further studies might be conducted to assess academicians from diverse sectors of education to get improved and explicit outcomes.

Limitation of the study

The study design was cross-sectional and hence temporality between exposure and outcomes could not be established. Although an effort was made to include male teachers in the study, the majority of the respondents were females. Hence, gender comparison in perceptions may not be uniform. Response bias is a possibility with under-reporting of certain attitudes.

Relevance of the study

Results showed that an increase in these protective factors increased the level of psychological wellbeing among teachers.

Authors Contribution

All authors have contributed equally.

Acknowledgement

References

1. Briner, R., Dewberry, C. Staff well-being is key to school success: A research study into the links between staff wellbeing and school performance. 2007. Retrieved from http://tss.custhelp.com/ci/fattach/get/370/0/filename/BirkbeckWBPerfSummaryFinal[1].pdf

2. McCallum, F., Price, D., Graham, A., Morrison, A. Teacher wellbeing: A review of the literature. AIS: NSW, 2017. The University of Adelaide, Australia, 34

3. Thakur, M., Chandrasekaran, V., Guddattu, V. Role conflict and psychological well-being in school teachers: A cross-sectional study from southern India. Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research, 2018;12(7):vc01–vc06. https://doi.org/10.7860/JCDR/2018/31776.11738

4. Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB) electronic version available at https://pcyc.formstack.com/forms/pwb

5. Huppert, F. A. Psychological Well-being: Evidence Regarding its Causes and Consequences. Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being, 2009;1(2):137–164. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-0854.2009.01008.x

6. Oskrochi, G., Bani-Mustafa, A.,Oskrochi, Y. Factors affecting psychological well-being: Evidence from two nationally representative surveys. PLoS ONE, 2018;13(6):1–14. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0198638

7. Lee, C., Hong, K. Work-Family Conflict and Its Relationship With Social Support : A Study at Private Educational Institutions in Kuching, Sarawak , Malaysia. Educational Research Journal, 2005;20(2):221–244. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2011.00562.x

8. Reddy, Nk., Vranda, M., Ahmed, A., Nirmala, B., Siddaramu, B. Work-life balance among married women employees. Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine, 2010;32(2):112. https://doi.org/10.4103/0253-7176.78508

9. Kittel, F., Leynen, F. A study of work stressors and wellness/health outcomes among Belgian school teachers. Psychology and Health, 2003;18(4):501–510. https://doi.org/10.1080/0887044031000147229

10. Paryani, S Study of Work -Life Balance of Faculties of Engineering & Management Institutes With Special Reference To Mumbai & Pune region. A dissertation thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Phylosophy to the D. Y. Patil University, 2014. Navi Mumbai, July.

Tables

TABLE 1 DIMENSIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF TEACHERS(N=460)

		Government-Rural(n%)	Government-Urban(n%)	Private-Rural(n%)	Private-Urban(n%)
Domains		n=230	n=87	n=109	n=34
	High	5 (2.1)	10 (11.5)	**21 (19.3)**	3 (8.8)
Autonomy	Moderate	180 (78.3)	71 (81.6)	83 (76.1)	27 (79.4)
	Poor	45 (19.6)	6 (6.9)	5 (4.6)	4 (11.8)
	High	9 (3.9)	10 (11.5)	**18 (16.5)**	2 (5.9)
Environmental mastery	Moderate	194 (84.4)	61 (70.1)	82 (75.2)	26 (76.5)
	Poor	27 (11.7)	16 (18.4)	9 (8.3)	6 (17.6)
	High	9 (3.9)	6 (6.9)	13 (11.9)	**6 (17.6)**
Personal growth	Moderate	194 (84.4)	71 (81.6)	85 (78.0)	21 (61.8)
	Poor	27 (11.7)	10 (11.5)	11 (10.1)	7 (20.6)
	High	**26 (11.3)**	6 (6.9)	11 (10.1)	3 (8.8)
Purpose in life	Moderate	164 (71.3)	79 (90.8)	96 (88.1)	29 (85.3)
	Poor	40 (17.4)	2 (2.3)	2 (1.8)	2 (5.9)
	High	5 (2.2)	10 (11.5)	12 (11.0)	**5 (14.7)**
Self-acceptance	Moderate	182 (79.1)	72 (82.8)	91 (83.5)	25 (73.5)
	Poor	43 (18.7)	5 (5.7)	6 (5.5)	4 (11.8)
	High	9 (3.9)	**14 (16.1)**	11 (10.1)	1 (2.9)
Positive relation	Moderate	195 (84.8)	59 (67.8)	88 (80.7)	27 (79.4)
	Poor	26 (11.3)	14 (16.1)	10 (9.2)	6 (17.7)

TABLE 2 UNIVARIATE AND MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF PREDICTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG TEACHERS

Domains	Variables	COR (95% CI)	p-value	AOR (95 % CI)	p-value
	Age				
Autonomy	30-35 years	0.435(0.158-1.201)	0.108	12.070(1.273-114.464)	**0.03**
	Number of children				
Environmental mastery	One	0.674(0.138-3.296)	0.626	0.022(0.001-0.453)	**0.013**
	Two	4.200(0.698-25.264)	0.117	0.024(0.001-0.460)	**0.013**
	Number of children				
Personal growth	Two	6.818(0.695-66.903)	0.099	0.103(0.016-0. 645)	**0.015**
	Age of children				
	Between 2-5 years	3.150(1.067-9.302)	0.038	14.172(1.422-141.243)	**0.024**
	Gender				
	Male	2.387(1.188-4.798)	0.015	4.966(1.650-14.952)	**0.004**
Self-acceptance	Monthly income				
	Rs 10,001-15,000	0.336(0.98-1.150)	0.082	4.470(1.012-19.745)	**0.048**
	Rs 15,001-20,000	0.430(0.171-1.082)	0.073	10.306(1.771-59.964)	**0.009**
	Travel time			0.092(0.014-0.608)	
	<30 mins	0.116(0.037-0.364)	0	0.120(0.018-0.807)	**0.013**
	Nearly 60 mins	0.198(0.065-0.602)	0.004		**0.029**