

Teachers' mental health and well-being in education: What can be improved for the education system in Indonesia?



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Abstract This article is based on a review of teachers' mental health, and well-being is closely linked to student outcomes and the overall school environment. Teachers' mental health and well-being are essential components of the educational landscape, profoundly influencing not only their personal lives but also the well-being and academic achievements of their students. This article explores the intricate connections between teachers' mental health, student-teacher relationships, educational experiences, and the surrounding environment. Research shows that when teachers experience poor mental well-being, it can negatively impact students' mental health, resulting in adverse effects on the teaching and learning process. Consequently, it is crucial to implement interventions that bolster teachers' mental health, which can subsequently improve student learning outcomes. The article advocates for a holistic approach to enhancing teachers' mental health in Indonesia, which includes mental health literacy training, continuous professional development, and the establishment of supportive school environments. Training that emphasizes understanding mental health issues and the significance of seeking assistance can shift teachers' perspectives on mental health, promoting a more inclusive and supportive school culture. Furthermore, social support from colleagues and the broader community is highlighted as a vital element in improving teachers' mental health literacy. By adopting support systems akin to those found in other countries, such as Japan, Indonesia can foster a more conducive environment for both teachers and students. The article underscores the importance of structural and cultural transformations within schools to enhance the mental health of both educators and students. Through the implementation of evidence-based strategies, Indonesia can cultivate a healthier and more supportive educational atmosphere, ultimately benefiting the well-being of the entire school community.

Keywords: teachers, well-being, school climate, students, evidence-based

1. Introduction

Teachers' mental health and well-being in education play crucial roles not only in their own lives but also in the lives of their students. Research has shown that there are associations between teacher wellbeing and student wellbeing and psychological distress (Harding et al. (2019)). The mental health of teachers can impact students directly, with poor mental well-being potentially affecting the mental well-being of their students (Connor et al., 2022). Additionally, teacher presenteeism, where teachers are present at work but not fully functioning due to health issues, may involve the causal pathway between teacher and student mental health (Harding et al., 2019). Efforts to improve teachers' mental health and well-being have been explored through interventions such as the Wellbeing in Secondary Education (WISE) project, which aims to increase the mental health support and training available to secondary school teachers (Evans et al., 2022). This intervention is designed to improve the mental health and well-being of both teachers and students (Evans et al., 2022). Similarly, the WISE study, a cluster randomized controlled trial, tested whether an intervention to improve mental health support and training for high school teachers led to improved mental health and well-being for teachers and students compared with usual practice (Kidger et al., 2021).

Psychosocial school conditions, including teacher and classmate support, influence the mental well-being of middle-aged adolescents, highlighting the importance of a supportive school environment in enhancing student well-being (Låftman et al., 2023). Furthermore, the role of teachers in mitigating student stress to facilitate learning progression underscores the direct involvement of teachers in addressing student mental health issues and well-being concerns (Willis et al., 2020). Teachers' awareness of students' psychosocial well-being is crucial, with trained teachers showing a greater tendency to be aware of the psychosocial well-being of school children (Pokharel & Adhikari, 2020). Moreover, the mental health of teachers has been compared with that of other professions, with stress from the job being a significant factor leading teachers to leave the profession (Jerrim et al., 2020).



2. Support System for the Mental Health and Well-Being of School Teachers

Improving the mental health and well-being of schoolteachers is crucial for fostering a positive educational environment that benefits both teachers and students. Various strategies and interventions have been suggested in the literature to support teachers' mental health and overall well-being. One effective approach is the implementation of school-wide positive behavior interventions and support. Research has indicated that positive school climates can enhance teachers' emotional well-being and sense of competence, consequently leading to improved student outcomes (Ross et al. 2011). Additionally, interventions such as the Wellbeing in Secondary Education (WISE) study have proven the effectiveness of targeted programs in enhancing mental health support and training for high school teachers, resulting in improved well-being for both teachers and students (Kidger et al., 2021). Mindfulness-based interventions and stress reduction programs have also been recommended to alleviate stress and burnout among teachers. The implementation of appropriate school-based interventions can help enhance teachers' stress-coping abilities, reduce burnout, and improve their general well-being (Agyapong et al., 2023).

Furthermore, social-emotional learning interventions have demonstrated the potential to increase the well-being of both students and teachers by improving classroom dynamics (Sandilos et al., 2022). Investing in teachers' emotional well-being at an organizational level is paramount. While strategies such as self-care practices, attending training, and learning emotional regulation techniques are beneficial, addressing teachers' emotional well-being systematically within the school environment is essential for sustainable improvements (Stark et al., 2022). Additionally, creating a supportive work environment that caters to teachers' psychological, social, political, and economic needs can significantly increase their overall well-being (Zakaria et al., 2021).

Moreover, integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) curricula into teacher education programs can establish a foundation for the well-being of both teachers and students. By emphasizing SEL in teacher training, programs can equip educators with the necessary tools to create supportive learning environments that promote belonging and well-being for all individuals involved in the educational system (Katz et al., 2020). In conclusion, enhancing the mental health and well-being of school teachers necessitates a multifaceted approach that encompasses organizational support, targeted interventions, mindfulness practices, social-emotional learning, and the integration of a well-being-focused curriculum in teacher education programs. By prioritizing teachers' well-being, schools can cultivate a positive and supportive environment that benefits the entire school community.

3. Improving the Mental Health and Well-Being of School Teachers

To establish a robust support system for the mental health and well-being of school teachers, it is essential to consider evidence-based strategies and interventions from the available literature. Several references provide valuable insights into effective approaches that can be implemented to enhance teachers' mental health and well-being within educational settings. One key strategy is the implementation of the multitiered system of support (MTSS) framework, which allows school personnel to provide interventions for students at various stages of their mental health needs within the learning environment Kratt (2018). By utilizing this framework, teachers can access the necessary support and resources to address mental health challenges effectively, promoting a positive school climate conducive to well-being. The WISE study, a cluster randomized controlled trial, demonstrated the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving mental health support and training for high school teachers, leading to enhanced well-being for both teachers and students (Kidger et al., 2021).

The implementation of similar evidence-based interventions can provide teachers with the necessary tools and resources to manage stress, prevent burnout, and prioritize their mental health. Furthermore, research has highlighted the importance of teacher support, class belonging, and social-emotional wellness in promoting mental well-being among students in educational settings (Brandseth et al., 2019). By fostering a supportive environment and enhancing teacher–student relationships, schools can create a positive atmosphere that benefits both teachers' and students' mental health. Additionally, providing mental health literacy training for teachers has been shown to improve their knowledge, reduce stigma, and enhance help-seeking efficacy (Kutcher et al., 2016). Equipping teachers with the necessary skills and resources to support student mental health can contribute to a more inclusive and supportive school environment.

According to various studies, enhancing school mental health literacy among teachers can have significant positive impacts. Kutcher et al. (2016) emphasized the effectiveness of a school mental health literacy curriculum resource training approach in improving teachers' mental health knowledge, reducing stigma, and enhancing help-seeking efficacy. This approach, which is sustainable and replicable, could be adapted in Indonesia to empower teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to support their mental health and that of their students. Furthermore, addressing teachers' professional pressure is essential for improving their mental health, as highlighted by (Guan et al., 2021). Artificial intelligence combined with human–computer interaction can alleviate this pressure and enhance teachers' psychological well-being. The implementation of such technological solutions alongside mental health literacy programs could offer comprehensive support to teachers in Indonesia. In addition to training programs, providing adequate resources and support systems within schools is crucial. Kamel et al. (2020) reported that teachers in Saudi Arabia recognized the importance of having psychologists in schools,

access to educational materials on mental health, and hotlines for dealing with mental health issues. Similar initiatives could be implemented in Indonesia to create a supportive environment for teachers' mental health.

Moreover, self-efficacy plays a significant role in teachers' ability to support their mental health needs. Brann et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of teachers' belief in their capacity to address mental health issues effectively. By enhancing teachers' mental health self-efficacy through targeted training and support, their ability to positively impact students' well-being can be strengthened. Structural and cultural changes within the school environment are also essential for improving teacher and student mental health, as suggested by (Kidger et al., 2021). Focusing on creating a supportive and inclusive school culture can contribute to the overall well-being of teachers and students in Indonesia. Teacher training is a key aspect of improving the mental health literacy and recognition of students at risk. Ohrt et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of not only educating teachers but also changing their attitudes toward mental health. By incorporating mental health training into teacher education programs and promoting positive attitudes, Indonesia can foster a more mentally healthy school environment. Furthermore, promoting mental health literacy among teachers can significantly affect students' well-being. Carr et al. (2017) highlighted that enhancing teachers' mental health literacy can lead to improved access to mental health care for students, ultimately reducing negative outcomes associated with untreated mental disorders. This underscores the interconnectedness of teacher and student mental health. In Japan, a compulsory educational mental health support system involving various specialists has been implemented in schools. Nishio et al. (2020) discuss the roles of school nurses, counselors, advisors, and social workers in supporting students' mental health.

Adopting a similar system in Indonesia could provide comprehensive mental health support within educational settings. Social support also plays a crucial role in improving teachers' mental health literacy. Li et al. (2022) highlighted the impact of social support on teachers' mental health literacy. By fostering a supportive network within schools and communities, teachers in Indonesia can enhance their understanding of mental health issues and improve their well-being. In conclusion, improving the mental health and well-being of school teachers in Indonesia requires a comprehensive approach that includes mental health literacy training, structural support within schools, self-efficacy enhancement, cultural changes, and social support systems. By implementing evidence-based strategies from various studies, Indonesia can create a conducive environment for teachers to thrive mentally and support the holistic well-being of students.

4. Suggestions for Improving the Mental Health and Well-Being of Indonesian Teachers

Improving the mental health and well-being of school teachers in Indonesia is a critical endeavor that necessitates a comprehensive and evidence-based approach. The mental health and well-being of teachers are critical for the overall success of the education system. In Indonesia, teachers often face various challenges that can negatively impact their mental health, including heavy workloads, a lack of resources, and high-stress environments. Addressing these challenges through targeted strategies can significantly improve their well-being and, consequently, their performance in the classroom. Improving the mental health and well-being of teachers requires a comprehensive approach that addresses various aspects of their professional and personal lives. By implementing these strategies, schools and educational authorities in Indonesia can create a more supportive and healthier environment for teachers, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes. Stakeholders must recognize the importance of teacher well-being and take proactive steps to support it. The following are several suggestions for enhancing the mental health and well-being of Indonesian teachers:

4.1. Professional development and training programs

Continuous professional development is essential for teachers to stay updated with the latest teaching methods and to build their confidence. Regular training programs can help teachers manage classroom challenges more effectively, reduce stress, and improve job satisfaction. For example, providing workshops on stress management and classroom management techniques can equip teachers with the skills they need to handle their daily tasks more efficiently.

4.2. Mental health services and support

Access to mental health services, such as counseling and therapy, is vital for teachers to manage stress and mental health issues. Schools should provide these services to support teachers' mental well-being. Establishing partnerships with mental health professionals and creating in-school counseling services can offer teachers the support they need.

4.3. Work-life balance initiatives

Encouraging a healthy work-life balance is crucial for teachers' mental health. Schools can implement flexible working hours, reduce workload, and ensure adequate rest periods to help teachers balance their professional and personal lives. Allowing teachers to have more control over their schedules and workload can significantly reduce stress levels.

4.4. Supportive school environment

Creating a supportive school environment where teachers feel valued and respected can enhance their job satisfaction and mental health. This includes fostering a culture of appreciation and collaboration among staff. Regular team-building activities and recognition of teachers' achievements can contribute to a more positive work atmosphere.

4.5. *Peer support and mentoring programs*

The development of peer support networks and mentorship programs provides teachers with emotional support and practical advice, helping them navigate challenges more effectively. Mentorship programs can pair experienced teachers with newer teachers to offer guidance and support.

4.6. *Mindfulness and stress reduction programs*

The implementation of mindfulness and stress reduction programs can help teachers develop coping mechanisms to address stress and anxiety. These programs can be incorporated into the school schedule to ensure regular practice. Techniques such as meditation, yoga, and deep-breathing exercises can be beneficial.

4.7. *Adequate compensation and benefits*

Ensuring that teachers are adequately compensated and receive appropriate benefits can reduce financial stress and improve their overall well-being. This includes fair salaries, health benefits, and retirement plans. Adequate compensation can also enhance job satisfaction and motivation.

4.8. *Promoting physical health*

Encouraging teachers to engage in regular physical activity and providing resources for a healthy lifestyle can significantly improve their mental health. Schools can offer fitness programs and promote healthy eating habits. Regular physical activity can reduce stress, improve mood, and increase overall health.

Another effective strategy, as highlighted by Jorm et al. (2010), is providing mental health first-aid training for teachers. This training equips teachers with the necessary skills to recognize mental health issues, reduce stigma, and provide appropriate support. By empowering teachers with this knowledge, they can serve as valuable sources of mental health information for both students and colleagues, contributing to a more supportive school environment. The incorporation of mental health literacy into the school curriculum can have lasting benefits, as demonstrated by McLuckie et al. (2014). By providing teachers with resources and training to integrate mental health education into the standard curriculum, schools can enhance the knowledge and attitudes of both teachers and students. This approach not only promotes mental health awareness but also fosters a culture of understanding and support within educational settings in Indonesia. The implementation of a compulsory educational mental health support system, similar to that in Japan (Nishio et al., 2020), could significantly impact mental health outcomes among teachers and students in Indonesia. Early detection, assessment, and support within schools are crucial for addressing mental health issues effectively and promoting overall well-being. By establishing structured support systems, schools can create a nurturing environment that prioritizes mental health.

Addressing teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward mental health is essential, as highlighted by (Kamel et al., 2020). Training programs that focus on enhancing teachers' understanding of mental health issues and the importance of seeking help can contribute to a more supportive school culture. By promoting awareness, providing access to resources, and offering avenues for support, schools in Indonesia can empower teachers to play a proactive role in addressing mental health challenges. Creating a sense of psychological safety within schools is paramount for both teachers and students, as emphasized by Munira et al. (2023). Addressing issues such as bullying and fostering an inclusive environment can significantly impact the mental well-being of individuals within the school community. By promoting a culture of respect, understanding, and support, schools can cultivate an atmosphere conducive to positive mental health outcomes. Furthermore, enhancing teachers' mental health literacy can lead to improved attitudes and perceptions toward mental health, as suggested by (Sibanda et al., 2022). By providing training on psychosocial support and linking teachers to appropriate care resources, schools can equip educators with the skills needed to support students effectively. This holistic approach to mental health literacy can contribute to a more comprehensive support system within educational settings. The incorporation of school-based mental health interventions, such as those implemented in urban Pakistan (Imran et al., 2022), can lead to significant improvements in teachers' mental health literacy and self-efficacy. By offering targeted interventions and training programs, schools in Indonesia can increase teachers' capacity to address mental health issues and promote well-being among both educators and students.

The impact of workplace factors on teachers' mental well-being cannot be overlooked, as highlighted by Piyakun & Salim (2023). Addressing issues such as job burnout and anxiety through supportive policies and practices can significantly improve teachers' mental health outcomes. By prioritizing teacher well-being and implementing strategies to mitigate workplace stressors, schools can create a more conducive environment for mental health. In conclusion, improving the mental health and well-being of school teachers in Indonesia requires a multifaceted approach that includes mental health literacy training, structural support systems, cultural interventions, and workplace well-being initiatives. By drawing on evidence-based

practices and implementing targeted interventions, schools can foster a supportive and inclusive environment that prioritizes mental health for both teachers and students.

5. Conclusion

The mental health and well-being of schoolteachers are crucial aspects that significantly impact the overall school environment and student outcomes. The mental health and well-being of teachers play a crucial role in creating a positive educational atmosphere, significantly influencing both the lives of educators and the academic success of their students. It is important to understand the complex connections between teachers' mental health, their relationships with students, and the overall school environment to develop effective support systems. To improve teachers' mental health, a comprehensive approach is required. This should include mental health literacy training, ongoing professional development, and the creation of supportive school environments. Such measures can empower teachers to gain a deeper understanding of mental health issues and foster a culture of support and inclusivity within their schools. Moreover, building strong social networks among teachers and the wider community can greatly enhance their awareness of mental health and their ability to cope with challenges. By drawing inspiration from successful practices in other countries, Indonesia has the potential to create a more supportive environment for both teachers and students. It is essential to implement structural and cultural changes within schools to effectively address the mental health needs of both educators and students. Ultimately, by focusing on teachers' mental health through evidence-based strategies, Indonesia can develop a vibrant educational environment that promotes the well-being of the entire school community.

Ethical Considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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