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LOOKING AFTER TEACHER WELLBEING: DOES TEACHER EMPOWERMENT MATTER?

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ABSTRACT

It is well acknowledged that teachers' wellbeing has an impact on teachers' work and play a deciding role in the achievements and improvement of both students and schools. A positive internal environment will ensure that teachers are happy and enjoy their work. This study focuses on the relationship between teacher empowerment (TE) and teacher wellbeing at the workplace (TWB). It examines the various subscales of TE to determine the subscales that best predict TWB. The study tool consists of the adapted instrument, the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) that measures teachers' perceived empowerment and a modified version of the Workplace Wellbeing Index that measures TWB. This study was a cross-sectional survey involving 371 schoolteachers selected via multi-stage sampling in one of the states in Malaysia. Results showed no significant difference in TWB based on the demographic factors (gender and age). Results also indicated significant positive correlations between TE and TWB ($r=.64$, $p<0.01$) and TE explained as high as 60% of the variance in TWB ($r^2=.60$, $F=91.187$). Separate analysis of the TE dimensions witnessed only the Decision-Making dimension positively and significantly predicted TWB ($\beta=0.65$, $p<0.05$).

Keyword: Teacher Wellbeing, Teacher Empowerment, Teacher Happiness



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INTRODUCTION

A positive internal environment at the workplace has been proven in numerous theories and literature as one of the crucial factors contributing to employee satisfaction, job performance, and high organisational performance. A positive work environment such as trust, strong social support, and a good reward system to employees are found to be significant in influencing workers' behaviours and emotions that ultimately improve their job performances (Isa, Jam, Tenah, Kadir, & Palpanadan, 2019; Urrutia, Borja, Castillo, & Magana, 2019). Theory Z of Ouchi (1981), also explained that trust, respect, empowerment, and intimacy in an organisation are the keys to enhance employee wellbeing (Azumi, 1982). Based on this organisational behavioural theory, employees who feel comfortable at work will be more loyal to their organisation and committed to their job (Chen, Cheng, & Sato, 2017). In other words, employee wellbeing in the workplace must be safeguarded to ensure a positive return for the organisation.

In schools, teacher wellbeing at the workplace (TWB) must be given serious consideration to make sure that teachers can work comfortably. Teachers are considered as key personnel and change agents for any successful education reform (Thien & Adams, 2019). Teachers and their teaching quality have been shown as one of the most important contributing factors to students' success, satisfaction, and achievements (Blömeke, Olsen, & Suhl, 2016; Jani, Muszali, Nathan, & Abdullah, 2018; Sirait, 2016). Very often, the implementation of changes influenced teachers' work situation and job satisfaction. It is implied in many studies that the successful implementation of changes depends on how teachers perceived their job satisfaction. Do they feel happy? Is their wellbeing being seriously considered as 'essential'? For the teachers to be effective in their work to maintain the quality of the teaching and learning process, TWB is one of the crucial factors to be considered (Schleicher, 2018; Teacher Wellbeing Research Report, 2019). They need to be provided with the best environment that they enjoy working in.

Efforts to provide physical comfort and wellness for teachers so as to contain their wellbeing may consume a lot of financial resources. With the limited budget available, TWB is often sidestepped and overlooked as a 'nice to have' rather than as 'essential' component (Education Support, 2019). A study on human resource management conducted by Guest (2017) also pointed out that factors affecting employee wellbeing are often overlooked. However, there is much which can be done with regard to mental and emotional wellbeing. For example, in order to ensure that 21st-century learning is implemented effectively, teachers' autonomy should be respected. To a certain extent, teacher should be empowered to make instructional decision making so that they become more creative in finding the right approaches to stimulate optimal students' engagement (Kangas, Siklander, Randolph, & Ruokamo, 2017).

Studies done in the top ten leading countries in international assessments such as TIMSS and PISA (Schleicher, 2018) highlighted that teachers need to be given ample opportunities to increase their participation in decision making for school-level decisions. Teachers in Finland, whose students consistently obtained high achievements in the international assessments, reported high levels of wellbeing and professional autonomy (Kola & Gbenga, 2015; Schleicher, 2018). Unfortunately, not all countries offer their schoolteachers a similar level of freedom, particularly in decision-making. In fact, most of them have very limited opportunities to participate in the decision-making process (Bush, Ng, Wei, Josephine, Glover & Lee, 2019). For example, the top-down system still dominates the education sector in Malaysia even though the concept of decentralisation has been implemented since 1992 (Bush et al., 2019). In relation to that, the level of TE is still not at a satisfactory level (Ali, Abdullah, & Mohamed, 2019; Chan, Rosidih, & Khor, 2017).

Positive internal environment, school culture and relationship with the co-workers contribute to TWB (Teacher Wellbeing Research Report, 2019). In addition, teachers who are comfortable with their tasks, given the ability to teach, entrusted to be responsible, and experience a good relationship with the administrators are likely to have an enhanced TWB and better work effectiveness (Chen, 2014). The various limitations faced by the teachers during



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work can pose as inconveniences to them and make them feel demotivated eventually. This is especially worrying because the constraints on teaching creativity at work are feared to be the main reason of demotivation and unhappiness among teachers. A recent study has proven that a happy worker is a productive worker (Urrutia et al., 2019). Balakrishnan (2018) also found that happy teachers cast an impact on the students' happiness. Thus, the question of how to enhance teachers' happiness must be given serious consideration.

This paper reports a study which was conducted to examine the relationship between teacher empowerment (TE) and teacher wellbeing (TWB) at their workplaces. The objectives of the study are:

- i) To determine the levels of teacher empowerment (TE) and teacher wellbeing at the workplace (TWB).
- ii) To analyse the differences in TWB based on demographic factors (gender and age).
- iii) To identify the relationship between TE and TWB
- iv) To examine the influence of overall TE and the contribution of each TE dimension on TWB.

The hypotheses are:

H₀1: There is no difference in TWB based on gender

H₀2: There is no difference in TWB based on age

H_A3: There is a positive and significant relationship between TE and TWB.

H_A4: Overall TE significantly contribute to TWB

H_A4a: The dimension of Decision Making in TE significantly contribute to TWB

H_A4b: The dimension of Impact in TE significantly contribute to TWB

H_A4c: The dimension of Professional Growth in TE significantly contribute to TWB

H_A4d: The dimension of Status in TE significantly contribute to TWB

H_A4e: The dimension of Self-Efficacy in TE significantly contribute to TWB

H_A4f: The dimension of Autonomy in TE significantly contribute to TWB

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher Empowerment

Teacher empowerment (TE) can be interpreted in many different ways based on the underlying cultures and contexts. According to Kefalidou, Vassilakis, and Pitsalidis (2015), empowerment is defined as the transfer of power and responsibilities of decision-making in order to achieve better work performance and employee satisfaction. Empowerment can also be seen as an expression of appreciation from the leader of an organisation to its employees (Bogler & Nir, 2012). In the field of education, Short and Rinehart (1992) proposed psychological empowerment in identifying the components of school participation in TE. In the study, the authors developed an instrument appropriate for educational institutions and proposed six dimensions that best explain psychological empowerment, namely autonomy, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, impact, and decision-making.

Short and Rinehart (1992) defined TE as the extent to which teachers perceive their effectiveness at work, recognise the impact they have at school, enjoy collaborative relationships, realise the high status that they have, and believe that they work with a good level of knowledge about teaching and learning. A recent study by Yusoff, Tengku-Arifin, and Zalli (2020) adapted the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) for Malaysian teachers and slightly redefined the dimensions of decision-making and autonomy because they were relatively different from the initial operational definitions stated by previous studies in the Western countries. In Malaysian context, teacher decision-making and autonomy are somewhat confined to instructional-related matters.



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Teacher Wellbeing at the Workplace

A study conducted by McCallum, Price, Graham, and Morrison (2017) found that teachers' work quality is well acknowledged as one of the most important factors contributing to students' success, satisfaction, and achievements. Consequently, the management of emotional labour and the importance of professional social networks were necessary for retaining and sustaining the teaching profession (Acton & Glasgow, 2015). In other words, teachers' wellbeing is perceived as highly important for the future of education. Aelterman, Engels, Van Petegem, and Pierre Verhaeghe (2007) defined wellbeing as a 'positive emotional state that is the result of harmony between the sum of specific environmental factors on one hand and the personal needs and expectations of teachers on the other'. In addition, Acton and Glasgow (2015) also described teacher wellbeing as a sense of personal professional fulfilment, satisfaction, purposefulness, and happiness.

In short, TWB is the happiness that results from having a positive internal environment such as a good relationship with peers, good work conditions and supervision, achievements, recognition, and professional growth. In this study, TWB is defined according to Page (2005). She defined workplace wellbeing as the happiness experienced by workers. In the context of school, it encompasses how teachers feel and the factors that contribute to their happiness, especially in terms of motivation and hygiene factors as mentioned in Herzberg's two-factor theory.

Teacher Empowerment and Teacher Wellbeing at the Workplace

Previous studies have shown that TE cast a positive impact on individual teachers and indirectly affect school effectiveness. When teachers feel empowered, they are confident that they possess the skills and authority to make decisions; subsequently, this will enhance their professionalism and competencies (Ali et al., 2019; Banker, 2017). More importantly, studies have also highlighted the significance of empowered teachers with regard to the implementation of teaching and learning in the 21st century because a higher level of teacher autonomy and power will create professional educators who are more proactive and innovative (Ali et al., 2019; Arbaa, Jamil, & Ahmad, 2017; Balyer, Ozcan, & Yildiz, 2017).

Parallel to Theory Z of Ouchi, there are empirical evidences which linked employee (including teachers) empowerment and their workplace wellbeing. Although teacher empowerment research is widely explored, the availability of research which demonstrates its relationship with teacher wellbeing at the workplace is fairly minimal. Chartered College of Teaching (2020) stated that having sense of autonomy, relatedness as in being part of a group, being supported by leaders and being competent, are all important for employee wellbeing. Most of the abovementioned elements are similar to the dimensions of teacher empowerment. Another study by Taştan (2013) among schoolteachers in Istanbul, Turkey, albeit using Psychological Empowerment and Psychological Wellbeing as the variables, also indicated that all the dimensions in the former (i.e., meaning, self-determination, competency and impact) are significantly correlated with the latter. A study conducted among new teachers in Malaysia indicated that teachers' wellbeing is the result of them gaining competency, establishing social acceptance and becoming more autonomous through learning and socialization (Tengku-Arifin, Awang-Hashim, & Yusof, 2014).

Several other studies (e.g. Amoli & Youran, 2014; Brezicha, Ikoma, Park, & LeTendre, 2019; Galletta, Portoghese, Fabbri, Pilia, & Campagna, 2016; Sun, 2016; Ziyaaddini & Naserieh, 2017), which have partly if not all of the elements of empowerment and wellbeing, also yields positive significant results. However, since most of these studies measured empowerment in aggregation, rather than dimensionally, there is a need to conduct research that can give a more detailed explanations with regard to the predictive power of each dimensions of Teacher Empowerment towards Teacher Wellbeing. The conceptual framework linking the variables of interest is illustrated in Figure 1.

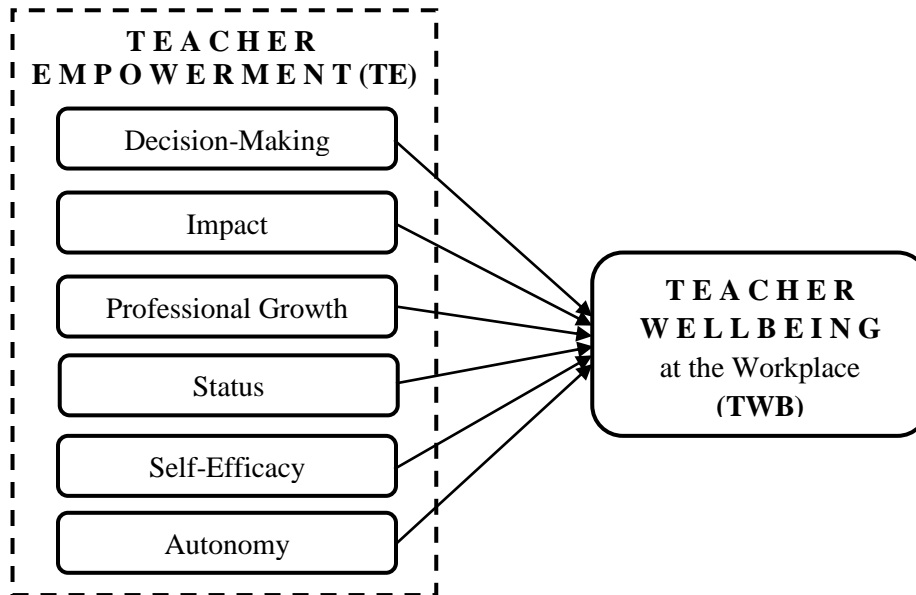


Figure 1. The conceptual framework linking the dimensions of teacher empowerment and teacher wellbeing at the workplace.

METHODS

Population and Sampling

This quantitative research employed a cross-sectional survey design. Respondents were selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure, as proposed by Sekaran and Bougie (2013). In the first stage, cluster random sampling was used, followed by systematic random sampling. A total of 371 secondary school teachers from 17 secondary schools in the state of Kelantan, Malaysia, were selected as respondents. The questionnaires were distributed after obtaining approval from the Educational Planning and Research Department (EPRD) at the Ministry of Education, the State Department of Education, and the respective school principals. The selected teachers willingly answered the questionnaires. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Data of Respondents

Demographic Data	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	107	28.8
Female	264	71.2
Age		
20-30	4	1.0
31-40	58	15.6
41-50	177	47.6
>51	132	35.8



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Instruments

The instruments chosen for this study were established ones, as elaborated in the following subsections. A 7-point (1='extremely disagree/dissatisfied' and 7= 'extremely agree/satisfied') numerical rating scale as proposed by Sekaran and Bougie (2013) was used for the measurement of the constructs of interest.

An adapted version of the School participation Empowerment Scale (SPES) by Yusoff et al. (2020) was used to measure the construct. This instrument consists of 35 items spread into six dimensions, validated via Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The fitness index for teacher empowerment measurement model was good (RMSEA = .066, CFI = .926, TLI = .920, ChiSq/df = 2.611).

For teacher wellbeing, a modified Workplace Wellbeing Index by Yusof, Awang-Hashim, and Tengku-Arifin (2015) was used to measure TWB. This instrument contains 16 items with two dimensions: intrinsic and extrinsic. The Cronbach's Alpha (α) values were obtained in a pilot study to determine the reliability values. Higher degree of Cronbach's Alpha value shows the consistency of an item and thus, qualified its use in the field study (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014). The reliability of the two instruments used in the present study is displayed in Table 2. Alpha (α) values for the dimensions of TE ranges from .78 to .94; whereas alpha (α) value for TWB was .92.

Table 2
Reliability of the Instruments

Construct	Dimension	Item	(α)	Decision
Teacher Empowerment	Decision-Making	8	.94	Reliable
	Impact	5	.87	Reliable
	Professional Growth	6	.92	Reliable
	Status	6	.78	Reliable
	Autonomy	4	.90	Reliable
	Self-Efficacy	6	.92	Reliable
Teacher Wellbeing at the Workplace (Overall)		16	.92	Reliable

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed with IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. The significance level was taken as $p < 0.05$. Descriptive statistics such as gender and age were described with mean and standard deviation (Creswell, 2014). Mean values was calculated for each construct, and t-test and ANOVA were conducted for the analyses of differences in TWB based on age and gender, respectively. In addition, inference analysis was generated through Pearson's correlation test that examined the relationship between TE and TWB. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictive factors in the dimension of TE towards TWB.

RESULTS

The Level of Teacher Empowerment and Teacher Wellbeing at the Workplace

The mean values of the dimensions were categorised into six sections: very high (>6.00), high (5.00-5.99), moderate-high (4.00-4.99), moderate-low (3.00-3.99), low (2.00-2.99), and very low (1.00-1.99) as suggested by Chua (2006). These categories were chosen in view of the 7-point rating scale in the study instrument. All the mean values are as shown in Table 3. Based on the findings, all six dimensions of TE were high. The decision-making dimension showed the highest mean value ($M=5.87$, $SD=0.59$) compared to the other five dimensions. This shows that teachers believed they are trusted in making decisions, especially those related to instructional matters.



Table 3

Weighted Mean and Descriptive Interpretation of the Level of Teacher Empowerment and Teacher Wellbeing at the Workplace of the Participants

Variables and dimensions	M	SD	Level
Teacher Empowerment (overall)	5.66	0.50	High
Decision-Making	5.87	0.59	High
Impact	5.41	0.63	High
Professional Growth	5.79	0.59	High
Status	5.54	0.67	High
Autonomy	5.35	0.58	High
Self-Efficacy	5.44	0.81	High
Teacher Workplace Wellbeing (overall)	5.60	0.79	High

This second highest mean was for the dimension of professional growth ($M=5.79$, $SD=0.59$). Teachers in Malaysian public schools are required to upgrade knowledge and skills via continuous professional development (CPD) programmes. Other dimensions such as status ($M=5.54$, $SD=0.67$), self-efficacy ($M=5.44$, $SD=0.81$) and impact ($M=5.41$, $SD=0.63$) also showed a high mean value; while the autonomy dimension recorded the lowest mean value ($M=5.35$, $SD=0.58$). This indicated that teachers might experience less autonomy in their schools due to the top-down approach practised in the schools in Malaysia. Overall, teachers in the study showed a high level of TE ($M=5.66$, $SD=0.50$) and TWB ($M=5.60$, $SD=0.76$).

The Differences in Teacher Wellbeing at the Workplace Based on Demographic Factors (gender and age)

There are two hypotheses for the differences in TWB based on two demographic variables, i.e., gender and age.

H₀₁: There is no difference in TWB based on gender;

H₀₂: There is no difference in TWB based on age

According to the t-test, although the male teachers had a slightly higher mean score of TWB ($M=5.69$, $SD=.73$) compared to the female teachers ($M=5.57$, $SD=.77$), there was no significant difference between the levels of TWB between the male and female teachers ($t(2)=1.41$, $p=.16$). The first hypothesis in this study, H₀₁ was thus supported.

Table 4

T-Test Analysis of Teachers' Wellbeing at the Workplace by Gender.

Gender	N	M	SD	t-value	df
Male	107	5.69	0.73	1.41	369
Female	264	5.57	0.77		

To test the difference of TWB based on their age groups, the one-way ANOVA test was used. It was found that the Levene's test of homogeneity was not significant ($p=.09$), thus the assumption of variance in the data was met. Results indicated that there was no significant difference in TWB based on their age groups, $F(50,320)=0.95$, $p<.57$. Therefore, hypothesis H₀₂ was supported. Based on Table 5, teachers under 30 years old showed the highest mean level of TWB ($M=5.75$, $SD=.60$), while those in the category of between 31-40 years old had the lowest mean value ($M=5.45$, $SD=.87$).



Table 5
ANOVA Analysis of Teachers' Wellbeing at the Workplace Based on Age

Age (Year old)	N	M	SD	F	df
30 and below	3	5.75	0.60	0.95	30,320
31-40	58	5.45	0.87		
41-50	176	5.63	0.73		
51 and above	134	5.64	0.74		

The Relationship between Teacher Empowerment and Teacher Wellbeing at the Workplace

The hypothesis formulated for the testing of correlation between TE and TWB is as such:
H_{A3}: There is a positive and significant relationship between TE and TWB.

Table 6 shows the relationships between TE and TWB. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) shows that TE was significantly and positively related to TWB ($r=.64, p<0.01$). Hence, H_{A3} was supported. The results indicated that TE is somewhat highly correlated with TWB (Cohen, 1988). The findings would mean that when teachers feel that the school administration empowers them, they would feel more at ease in the workplace.

Table 6
Correlation between Teacher Empowerment and Teacher Wellbeing at the Workplace

Constructs	n	M	SD	1	2
1. Teacher Wellbeing	371	5.60	0.79	1.00	
2. Teacher Empowerment	371	5.66	0.50	.64**	1.00

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The Influence of Teacher Empowerment on Teacher Wellbeing at the Workplace

There are altogether 7 hypotheses in this regard – one hypothesis for the influence of overall TE and the other 6 hypotheses for the influence of each dimension of TE on TWB:

- H_{A4}: Overall TE significantly contribute to TWB
- H_{A4a}: The dimension of Decision Making in TE significantly contribute to TWB
- H_{A4b}: The dimension of Impact in TE significantly contribute to TWB
- H_{A4c}: The dimension of Professional Growth in TE significantly contribute to TWB
- H_{A4d}: The dimension of Status in TE significantly contribute to TWB
- H_{A4e}: The dimension of Self-Efficacy in TE significantly contribute to TWB
- H_{A4f}: The dimension of Autonomy in TE significantly contribute to TWB

Based on Table 7, the findings showed that only the decision-making dimension positively and significantly explained 60% of the variance ($R^2=.60, F(6,364)=91.19, p<.01$).

Table 7
Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.78 ^a	.60	.59	.59

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Decision Making, Professional Growth, Efficacy, Status, Impact, Autonomy
- b. Dependent Variable: Teachers' Workplace Wellbeing



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Decision-making significantly predicted TWB with $\beta=0.65$, $p<0.01$. The other five dimensions did not show any significant contribution to TWB. From this, it could be generalised that teachers would only perceive their wellbeing at the workplace in a positive manner when they participated in the decision-making process.

Table 8
The Influence of Each Dimension of TE on TWB

Dimension	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.65	.11		6.21	.00
Autonomy	.04	.05	.04	.73	.50
Impact	.00	.05	.00	.09	.93
Efficacy	.05	.05	.06	1.06	.29
Professional Growth	.08	.05	.09	1.66	.09
Status	.03	.05	.04	.67	.50
Decision-Making	.60	.03	.65	16.48	.00

Dependent Variable: Teachers Workplace Wellbeing

DISCUSSION

In the present study, based on Theory Z (Ouchi, 1981) on the relationship between empowerment and employee wellbeing, the researchers hypothesised a positive and significant relationship between TE and TWB. Specifically, the researchers analysed the six dimensions of TE to identify the predictors of TWB. Theory Z of Ouchi (1981) states that empowerment serves as an internal positive work environment that leads to employee wellbeing. This theory assumes that individuals who feel empowered have an increased role in decision-making. They also received an enhanced level of trust and this subtle intimacy can produce better psychological wellbeing within themselves (Azumi, 1982; Barney, 2004). The findings support the theory and reveals the detail on dimensional influence of TE towards TWB.

The levels of Teacher Empowerment and Teacher Wellbeing at the Workplace

The levels of TE and TWB of teachers in the study were high. This indicates that the teachers were working in a positive internal environment. The measurement for TE in this study utilised the adapted version of School Participation Empowerment Scale (SPES). Compared to previous studies conducted by Ali et al. (2019) and Boey (2010), the current respondents reported higher level of TE. The discrepancies may be due to the different instruments used in these studies. Contrary to what was stated in the literature about how limited autonomy and empowerment evident among teachers in the public schools, due to top-down structure (Bush et al., 2019), it seems the respondents in the present study rated themselves as having the elements. Such notion is interesting because it gives impressions that to a certain extent, teachers in Malaysian public schools are starting to acknowledge the empowerment that are distributed to them. It can be concluded that high levels of TE and TWB signify that teachers are working in a positive internal environment and this could lead to positive impacts on the performance of teachers and schools.

The Differences in Teacher Wellbeing at the Workplace Based on Demographic Factors (Gender and Age)

This study found no difference in the wellbeing of teachers in the workplace, based on their age and gender, similar to the results of other studies conducted previously (e.g., Jewczyn, 2010; Kroupis, Kourtessis, Kouli, Tzetzis, Derri, & Mavrommatis, 2017; Yusof et al., 2015;). The authors concluded that the level of wellbeing of teachers at work could have been much influenced by the work environment, regardless of their gender. Furthermore, this phenomenon could also be explained by the fair distribution of tasks in schools without any gender bias.



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Therefore, it is more important to provide sufficient social support from the administrators or colleagues to ensure the wellbeing of teachers at the workplace, fairly enough, regardless of whether they are the male or female teachers.

The Relationship between Teacher Empowerment and Teacher Wellbeing at the Workplace

This study also found that TE is closely related to the wellbeing of teachers in the workplace. Despite the fact that TWB can be very subjective depending on the context, our results were consistent with several other studies (Browne, 2015; Taştan, 2013; Wall, Wood, & Leach, 2004). In other words, the higher the level of TE, the higher the level of TWB would be. Therefore, it is important to emphasise the empowerment of teachers in schools to ensure positive wellbeing of teachers.

Previous studies conducted by Kola and Gbenga (2015) and Boey (2010) showed that empowered teachers are more likely to have a sense of ownership over their work, a greater sense of responsibility towards their duties, and a higher level of comfort and satisfaction with their jobs. Besides, teachers who are works in a highly supportive social environment are more likely to report themselves as being in a healthy working environment (Holmgren, Love, Mardby, & Hensing, 2014). Another two studies by Ali et al. (2019) and Page and Vella-Brodrick, (2009) also pointed out the elements of a healthy work environment such as trust and leadership practices could improve the wellbeing of teachers in the workplace. In other words, the levels of TE and TWB could be the results of the presence of a supportive and healthy leadership in the workplace.

The Effect of Teacher Empowerment on Teacher Wellbeing at the Workplace

Consistent with previous studies (e.g., Brezicha et al., 2019; Cenkseven-Önder & Çolakkadioğlu, 2013; Schleicher, 2018; Siebert, Kunz, & Rolf, 2020; Taştan, 2013), this study demonstrated that teachers' involvement in decision-making at the workplace would greatly influence their wellbeing at the workplace. The novelty of the present study stands out due to the fact that the dimensions of TE has been analysed in separation, to predict TWB. Results showed that among the six dimensions of TE, the decision-making dimension was the only significant predictor towards TWB. In other words, other dimensions of TE such as impact, autonomy, professional development, status, and self-efficacy were not significant predictors of TWB, even though the mean levels of each dimension were high. Therefore, these findings revealed the importance for administrators to take into account how important it is for them to ensure that the teachers in their school perceive that their voices matter in decision-making. It is that element of participative or collective decision-making that influences their state of wellbeing at the workplace. Such similar notion about what contributes to employee happiness has also been highlighted by Ziyaaddini and Naserieh (2017).

CONCLUSION

The positive effect of teacher empowerment towards their wellbeing in this study provided support for the suggestion that administrators should enhanced teacher empowerment to boost teachers' wellbeing at the workplace. This study indicated that only the dimension of Teacher Empowerment which predicted teacher wellbeing is Decision-making. Such findings also provided important information for administrators on the best way to generate an enjoyable working condition for schoolteachers, i.e., by making them participate in the decision-making process. Teachers who are given the trust and responsibility in decision-making would feel more confident in carrying out their tasks and thus be able to work more comfortably. Conversely, if teachers are not given an opportunity in making decisions at the school level, their work motivation and job satisfaction would decline. As a result, they will avoid being engaged when their views are not taken into considerations. School leaders need to build a sense of positive outlook and satisfaction among the teachers towards their job by providing opportunities for teachers to make decisions about their work.



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The findings of the study can serve as a reference to the relevant parties, including school administrators, District or State Educational Departments and the teachers themselves, in a collective effort to enhance the wellbeing of teachers in schools. In order to generate a positive working environment, it is important to ensure full support and trust from the administrators and colleagues. Indeed, in support of such ideas, the concept of decentralisation has been highlighted in Malaysia's National Education Policy, way back in 1992. Practically speaking, the present study would suggest that in any school context, the principals and top administrators should avoid a top-down approach in most cases; instead, consensus should be emphasised before any decisions are made. Additionally, they must be more sensitive towards how their teachers interpret a positive internal environment if they want to achieve a competitive advantage for their school. The school leaders should play a more active role in promoting the wellbeing of teachers at the workplace.

Teachers are the implementers of all programmes organised by the school. Thus, they should be actively involved in the decision-making processes. When empowered by the school leaders, teachers must show their commitment and accountability in the collective decision-making process. Some teachers may feel complacent with the top-down management method, but little did they realize, such practice may rip them off from the wholesome feeling satisfaction and meaningfulness in their work and workplaces.

The district or state educational department can play a role in creating the optimal school environment that upholds the ideal way of teacher empowerment, by conducting awareness programmes for the school principals, administrators and teachers. In such programmes, the school members need to be mindful of how they could increase wellbeing in the workplace through empowerment practices.

Future research can replicate the study by examining the contribution of the dimensions of teacher empowerment towards teacher wellbeing through psychological and/or behavioural aspects, which can be proposed as mediating or moderating influences.

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