

## Article

# Navigating Teachers' Occupational Well-Being in the Tides of Classroom Processes and School Structures

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**Abstract:** The well-being of primary school teachers is vital for fostering effective teaching and learning, yet they face a range of challenges that negatively impact their occupational health. This phenomenological study explores the multifaceted factors influencing teacher occupational well-being, with a focus on classroom processes and school-related factors. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, this study gathered in-depth insights from Australian primary school teachers through semi-structured interviews. Participants were recruited from a variety of educational settings to capture diverse experiences and perspectives. Data were thematically analysed to identify key themes impacting teacher well-being. The findings revealed significant challenges impacting teacher well-being, including the demands of individualised student needs, classroom dynamics, the role of school leadership, resource limitations, and the complexities of parental involvement. Teachers expressed a need for more relevant professional development programs and highlighted the importance of supportive leadership and adequate resources. Additionally, workload and the balance between professional and personal life emerged as critical factors influencing teacher well-being. This study underscores the importance of addressing the complex and interconnected factors that contribute to teacher well-being. Implications for educational practice include the need for supportive and communicative leadership, adequate professional development tailored to teachers' needs, and the provision of sufficient resources to manage classroom diversity and demands. The findings advocate for systemic changes to foster a supportive educational environment that values and nurtures teacher well-being. Future research could explore effective strategies to support primary school teachers in their professional journeys.

**Keywords:** workload; primary school teacher; occupational well-being; classroom dynamics; school environment; teacher support



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## 1. Introduction

The interplay between classroom dynamics, school environment, and teacher well-being is a central concern in primary education worldwide, with a strong international consensus on their collective impact. The current global discourse emphasises that classroom processes are crucial for educational quality and essential for supporting both student and teacher well-being [1,2]. At the same time, various school factors—such as workload, student behaviour, and collegial relationships—have been recognised as significant influences on teacher well-being [2,3], underscoring the complex and multifaceted nature of

educational environments faced by primary school teachers globally. Australia's education system, characterised by its diverse student population and comprehensive teaching framework, serves as a pertinent case study. In 2023, the Australian education sector recorded over four million students and 311,655 full-time teaching staff across 9629 schools, highlighting the complex dynamics of student–teacher interactions and educational administration. Primary school enrolments saw an increase of 12,593 students from the previous year, marking a 0.6% rise [4].

The Australian education model emphasises the need for inclusive and adaptive teaching environments that meet mandated standards while reflecting the unique character of each school community [5,6]. Teacher well-being is a foundational component of this framework, as it directly impacts student performance and classroom harmony [7,8]. The interdependent relationship between teacher and student well-being suggests that for students to thrive, teachers must also experience a positive sense of well-being [9–11]. Despite the acknowledged challenges of high demands and diverse responsibilities in the profession, teacher well-being has become a pivotal factor in maintaining educational quality [11–13].

Classroom processes encompass a multifaceted array of interactions and strategies employed by teachers to facilitate learning and manage the classroom environment. These processes are paramount in creating an educational setting that promotes engagement, respect, and effective learning. Within this spectrum, teachers' abilities to manage disruptive behaviour and establish respectful, supportive relationships with students stand out as crucial elements for fostering a conducive learning atmosphere [14,15]. The importance of a conducive classroom has been recognised globally, with researchers advocating for environments that support both academic and emotional growth [16,17]. The teacher's role is central in this context, as they are not only imparting knowledge but also setting the classroom's tone, influencing the group's mood, and continually refining their teaching methodologies to meet diverse student needs [7]. Effective classroom management extends beyond discipline, shaping the social and emotional landscape of the classroom. This environment significantly affects students' ability to concentrate on academic tasks and their overall learning experience [18]. The dynamic interplay of classroom processes, such as teacher–student interactions, instructional methods, and classroom climate, has been shown to directly impact student engagement and academic success [8,19].

Moreover, teachers' organisational skills within the classroom significantly contribute to student engagement levels. Research indicates that teachers who excel in classroom management tend to foster higher levels of student involvement in their learning activities [20,21]. Additionally, a positive correlation exists between teachers' occupational well-being, manifested through self-efficacy and job satisfaction, and student academic achievements [22]. An orderly classroom environment is essential for effective instruction and learning. When teachers spend less time addressing disruptive behaviours, they can allocate more resources to teaching and facilitating a supportive learning environment. This not only advances academic instruction but also enhances students' social–emotional learning, providing a secure setting for students to engage and absorb the material [18,23].

Furthermore, the influence of school factors such as organisational culture, workload, and administrative support on teacher well-being has been extensively documented [11,24]. These elements not only impact teachers' job satisfaction and stress levels but also shape their ability to maintain effective learning environments [25,26]. Excessive bureaucracy within schools, identified as a significant stressor, can undermine teacher autonomy and creativity, leading to increased job dissatisfaction and burnout [11,27]. Similarly, factors like time pressure and job insecurity have been associated with higher rates of job burnout among educators, emphasizing the need for balanced workloads and secure employment conditions [25,28]. The time allocated for various teaching-related activities has been a particular concern, with research highlighting its impact on teacher stress levels and job satisfaction.

Proper time management within schools can help alleviate this stress, allowing teachers to focus more on instruction and student engagement [26]. A positive school environment is instrumental in promoting teacher well-being, encouraging professional growth, and fostering a sense of community among staff. Conversely, a negative school climate does not only influence teachers' daily experiences but also their long-term career decisions and effectiveness in the classroom [29]. It can lead to increased teacher burnout and diminished job satisfaction, which in turn affects student outcomes and overall school effectiveness [30,31]. By understanding and improving these school-related factors, educational institutions can create more supportive environments that benefit both teachers and students.

Despite the burgeoning interest in these areas, there exists a paucity of qualitative research exploring the nuanced interactions between classroom processes, school factors, and teacher occupational well-being. This study aims to bridge this gap by employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, guided by the OECD teacher well-being framework [2], to delve into the lived experiences of primary school teachers. This research seeks to elucidate the complex dynamics at play by answering the research question, "How is the teacher's occupational well-being impacted by classroom processes and other school-related factors?" By incorporating teachers' perspectives, this study aims to inform educational policies and practices that prioritise and enhance teacher occupational well-being.

#### *Theoretical Framework*

This study leverages the OECD teacher well-being framework, which delineates four core well-being dimensions—Cognitive, Subjective, Physical and Mental, and Social—and evaluates the outcomes in educational environments [2]. While the original framework considers both inward and outward outcomes, this research (which is part of a larger project) concentrates on the outward outcomes, specifically relating to classroom processes and the broader school environment. Notably, the framework has been modified to focus on school factors rather than student well-being, recognising the significant influence these elements have on the overall educational experience. This adaptation serves as the structural foundation for data collection and analysis, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that impact teacher well-being and, by extension, the quality of educational environments.

According to the OECD framework, classroom processes encompass a variety of elements that are essential to fostering an effective learning environment. These include the active support teachers provide to students, a crucial aspect that involves adapting teaching methods to enhance student engagement [2]. Additionally, feedback is recognised as a critical tool that significantly influences student learning outcomes and overall achievement [2]. The social climate of the classroom, which centres on the relationships between teachers and students, along with teacher cooperation, which involves collaboration among colleagues, also play pivotal roles in the educational experience. On the school-wide level, teachers often take on multiple roles within the school context, such as counselling students, communicating with parents, and participating in school management. These roles extend beyond typical teaching duties, adding layers of responsibility that can lead to increased stress and adversely affect their well-being [32,33]. Additionally, the climate of the classroom, which involves managing disruptive behaviour, further influences the teaching environment and the stress levels of educators [2].

## **2. Materials and Methods**

**Study Design:** This study adopted a phenomenological qualitative research design to explore the impact of classroom processes and school-related factors on teachers' occupational well-being. Phenomenology, as an epistemological stance, focuses on understanding and interpreting individuals' lived experiences within their natural contexts [34,35]. The philosophical roots of this approach lie in the belief that reality is constructed through individuals' experiences and perceptions. By employing a phenomenological approach,

this study aims to delve deeply into teachers' personal narratives and experiences, providing a rich, contextual understanding of how various factors influence their well-being within the educational setting [36]. The choice of a phenomenological design was justified as it enables the exploration of the subjective, lived experiences of teachers, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the intricate ways in which classroom dynamics and school factors contribute to their well-being. This approach aligns with the research question, which seeks to uncover the nuanced, deeply personal experiences of teachers that quantitative methods might overlook.

**Participant Recruitment and Sampling:** Participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, targeting primary school teachers with at least one year of teaching experience across various schools in Australia. This criterion was set to ensure that participants had sufficient experience to reflect upon regarding occupational well-being. Recruitment was conducted through educational forums and social media platforms dedicated to primary school teachers. All potential participants were provided with detailed information about the study's aims, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidentiality measures in place.

**Data Collection:** Data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, allowing for the flexibility to probe deeper into participants' responses and explore recurring themes. The interview guide was developed based on the research question (See Appendix A) and reviewed by external experts in educational psychology and qualitative research to ensure comprehensiveness and relevance. Interviews were conducted via phone call or video conferencing at various times based on the participants' preferences and were recorded with their consent. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 min, providing ample time to explore the participants' experiences and perspectives thoroughly. Before the interview, participants were given a brief overview of the study's purpose and the interview process, and their consent and demographic variables (context and years of teaching experience) were obtained. The interviews continued until data saturation was achieved [37]. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and participants were offered the chance to review their transcripts to validate the accuracy and interpretation of their experiences.

**Data Analysis:** The transcribed data were coded and analysed in NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd.; Version 12 for Windows) by three of the authors (JCN, EA and BMA) to ensure the credibility of the results. Data analysis was conducted using inductive thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework, which is particularly suited to phenomenological studies [38]. The analysis process involved familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. This approach allowed for the systematic organisation and interpretation of the data, ensuring that the findings were grounded in the participants' experiences. Throughout the analysis, reflexivity was maintained, with researchers documenting their assumptions, biases, and reflections to ensure the credibility and authenticity of the findings [39]. Peer debriefing and member checking were employed as additional checks to enhance the trustworthiness of the study's outcomes. Participants were entered into a draw to win one of four \$50 gift cards to compensate the participants for their time and involvement in the study [36]. To ensure anonymity, participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms. Illustrative quotes were reported verbatim to support the study findings. The study was reported using COREQ guidelines [40].

#### *Ethical Approval*

Ethics approval (H8638) for this study was obtained by the James Cook University Human Research Ethics Committee. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any time without any consequence, and the measures taken to protect their privacy and data. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their participation in the study. The recorded interview files were encrypted and securely

stored in a password-protected computer accessible only to authorised research personnel. To ensure confidentiality, all data were anonymised and assigned unique codes.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Participants' Profile

A total of 21 Australian primary school teachers, comprising classroom teachers ( $n = 11$ ), specialist teachers ( $n = 4$ ), learning support teachers ( $n = 2$ ), and school leaders ( $n = 4$ ), participated in this study. As shown in Table 1, most of the teachers were female (95%) and worked in public schools (59%). This aligns with the general profile in Australia—82% of primary school teachers are females and work in government schools [4]. The participants were from five Australian states: Australian Capital Territory (9.5%), New South Wales (24%), Northern Territory (19%), Queensland (24%), and Tasmania (24%). Teachers were aged between 29 to 62 years and had between 1 to above 20 years of teaching experience. Class size ranged from 7 to >30. Most of the teachers had a bachelor's degree (57%). Ninety-five per cent of the teachers had participated in in-service training (95%), and some of them teach composite classes (28.6%). Composite classes are classes that have more than one grade level (e.g., Years 2/3). Please see Appendix B for teacher characteristics.

**Table 1.** Participants' profile.

Variable	n (%)
Gender	
Female	20 (95.2)
Male	1 (4.8)
Age group	
29–39	5 (23.8)
40–49	4 (19)
50+	12 (57.1)
Years teaching in primary school	
1–5	2 (9.5)
6–10	6 (28.6)
11–15	5 (23.8)
16–20	1 (4.8)
20+	7 (33.3)
School type	
Public	12 (57.1)
Private	6 (28.6)
Catholic	3 (14.3)
Current class	
Prep	1 (4.8)
Year 1	1 (4.8)
Year 2	2 (9.5)
Year 3	4 (19)
Year 4	
Year 5	2 (9.5)
Year 6	2 (9.5)
Composite	4 (19)
Others	5 (23.8)
Highest degree	
Bachelor	12 (57.1)
Diploma	2 (9.5)
Graduate certificate	2 (9.5)
Master	4 (19)
PhD	1 (4.8)

Table 1. Cont.

Variable	n (%)
State	
ACT	2 (9.5)
NSW	5 (23.8)
NT	4 (19)
QLD	5 (23.8)
TAS	5 (23.8)
Class size	
<20	8 (38.1)
20–25	8 (38.1)
>26+	5 (23.8)
Professional development	
Yes	20 (95.2)
No	1 (4.8)

3.2. Themes Identified

Nine themes were identified regarding the factors that impact teachers’ occupational well-being (Figure 1). Three of these themes were related to classroom processes (Classroom Management, Challenges in the Classroom, and Mismatch between Theoretical Training and Practical Realities), while the remaining six themes were school-related factors (Excessive Workload, Leadership Quality, Societal Perceptions and Influence, Support Systems, Feeling Valued and Appreciated, and Teacher Job Satisfaction), three of which were positive factors that enhanced teachers’ occupational well-being.

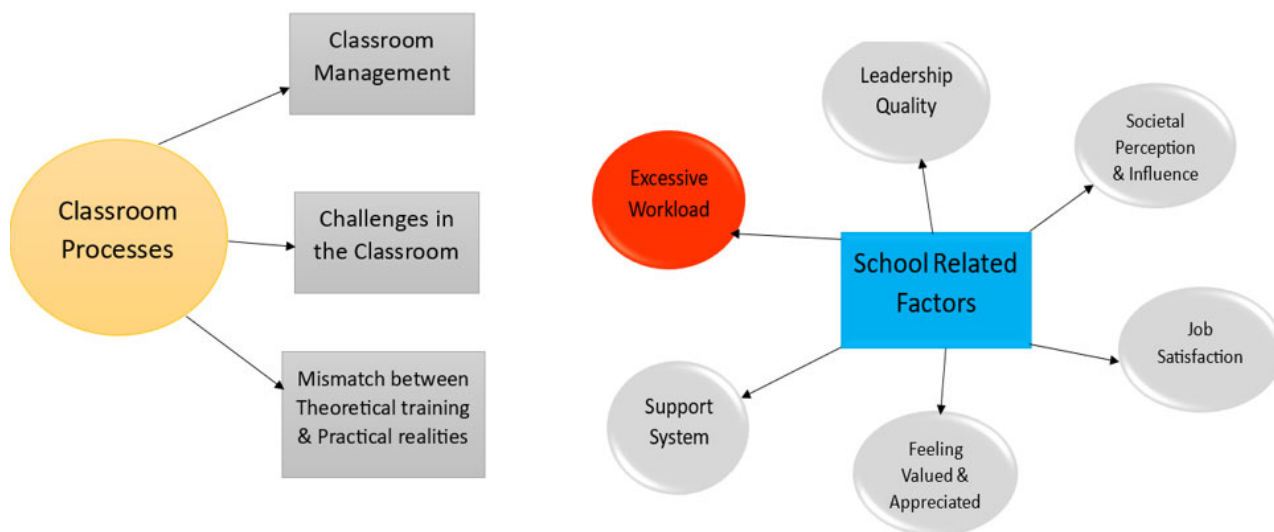


Figure 1. Classroom processes and school-related factors that impact teachers’ occupational well-being.

Theme 1: Classroom Management

The participants indicated that effective classroom management and tailored instructional strategies are critical to fostering a positive learning environment, though it can be challenging for teacher well-being. Teachers employ various strategies to meet the diverse needs of their students, which is essential for maintaining a conducive learning environment. Jadin, a teacher in a rural setting with a composite class (Years 4–6), described her approach to individualised instruction:

*“I differentiate heavily. So, I have an individualised spelling program for every child, based on data that we did at the beginning of the year. I do guided reading, so that every child is in a group that relates to what they need in reading. It’s quite hands on and that tends to work. Time is a major challenge because I could be teaching maths and have 7*



*different groups that I'm teaching to, and I teach a 4, 5, 6, anyway. So, I've already got 3 curriculums." (Jadin)*

Similarly, Maz, a Year 5 teacher, emphasised the importance of personalised planning. She is always thinking of the individual child while doing her lesson planning, considering how to get every single child in the class to have a go on their skills and ensure the learning objectives are achieved within a 40 min lesson.

*"I think of each child individually and so then I prepare different things for different kids. Also, there'll be hands-on activities, or there might be an activity where I've recorded my voice on an iPad and they listen to me, seeing the instructions a few times so that they are independent, and they can do it with other children. And then I have children who will be doing creative things. They will be taking photos or doing a slide show of what everyone else is doing. So, then we put it on the wall." (Maz)*

**Understanding Students' Needs:** Understanding and catering to the unique needs of students, particularly those with special needs, is crucial for effective classroom management. Mira said she always looks for an opportunity to target their strengths because every child is different.

*"Basically, every single student is clearly different. So, you need to find out what their strengths are, what are (the) opportunities, where the opportunities are, you have to judge, and make sure you're targeting that all the time, because if it's too hard for them or too easy for them. . . , like some kids who can't speak English, not one sound when others can comfortably speak, read and write. So, it's a big, big range in the classroom. I need to make sure that everyone's needs are being met at once." (Mira)*

Sod's reflection on the necessity of understanding specific conditions like post-traumatic stress and autism to provide appropriate support underscores the depth of work required.

*"So, if I think about students with post-traumatic stress. You need to have an understanding of what post-traumatic stress is and how it presents itself. Without understanding it, it's hard to cater for students who have that in your classroom. In terms of the child with Autism, it's a spectrum, it depends on whereabout on spectrum they are because when you've taught a child with autism, you've taught one child with autism. They all present differently. You need to understand the spectrum then you also need to understand the individual along with it. They are going to present differently with different needs. Sometimes that means having a lot more visual prompt around the classroom to help them understand what's happening throughout the day. . . . I think it all boils down to knowing your students." (Sod)*

## Theme 2: Challenges in the Classroom

Teachers face numerous challenges in the classroom, including managing diverse student behaviours and coping with inadequate resources. These challenges can impact their well-being and job satisfaction.

**Behavioural Challenges:** Managing student behaviour is a significant challenge for many teachers. The challenge of creating a rich learning environment, while managing disruptive behaviours and supporting students with emotional needs, is an intense dilemma for teachers. The teachers reported that this emotional classroom chaos directly affects their work environment and conditions and has a negative impact on their mental and physical health.

*"Maybe lately I've been quite burnt out and I've had a really difficult class this year. I have a lot of special needs. Probably about seven of my children have special needs. So, it's a lot of work, and I spend a lot more time probably managing behaviour than I actually do teaching, which is really hard, which therefore makes my well-being feel like I'm continuously just sorting out bad behaviours and fixing problems. So, I'm stressed more, I'm tired more, am frustrated more." (Val)*

Sey highlighted the difficulties posed by high behavioural needs and diverse abilities. Nath also described extreme reactions in the classroom.

*“High behaviour needs, high learning needs, and a really diverse range of abilities. It’s hard to fit all the curriculum in. And I guess I spend a lot of time planning engaging activities. If they are challenging kids, it has to be really engaging.” (Sey)*

*“I’ve seen it in mainstream, huge reactions, with tables, throwing items, like big heavy items, chairs, things like that. So, then usually you don’t yell back at them. You just either get out of the room with the other children. You can try to say, have you used your strategy? And I think the children’s behaviour is deteriorating over the years. Like Preschool children won’t even do what they’re asked and they are 4 or 5.” (Nath)*

**Resource Constraints:** Inadequate resources further complicate teaching and can negatively impact teacher well-being. Adequate resources, from technological tools to physical classroom aids, significantly influence teachers’ abilities to effectively educate and manage their classes. The narratives of Zem and Wet reveal the frustration and limitations imposed by insufficient resources, particularly in rural settings, impacting both the quality of education and teachers’ sense of efficacy and well-being. This emphasises the critical role that proper support plays in the educational environment.

*“They [school leadership] are so strict with money. They don’t give us money to buy classroom resources. They only order basic things like marker, pencil, book, and that is it. And I teach early childhood, and I need a lot of resources. So, it’s even making the job frustrating for me. I remember when I first started, I told the management about some things needed. At first when you start, they say oh anything you need, you’ll have it. You are allocated so, so amount in your classroom. I was excited, wow! I am allocated this to my classroom, you know that excitement. When I took everything to buy [needed], they just shut me down. They don’t really need this one, go and be using the old ones that the previous teacher kept there. You know, no matter how motivated you are, that will bring you down totally.” (Zem)*

*“There are not enough resources. So, for technology for example, the headphones didn’t work, the software was outdated, the software wasn’t compatible with other software and I was using multiple pieces of software to get an outcome. And so, you use one and then it will shut down and so you have to restart it again, and hope that it will be compatible and ask people for support. IT support externally because I had to work around the software being incompatible and outdated. Some of the hardware didn’t work, so I had to get lots of things repaired. Putting request for it to be repaired. There wasn’t any funding to pay for that. And where I’m currently located it’s 6 h from any major cities. So, if you want anything fixed, you have to either send it away or wait for the one person who comes around every 9 months to actually fix it.” (Wet)*

### Theme 3: Mismatch between Theoretical Training and Practical Realities

This theme encapsulates the disconnect many teachers experience between the theoretical training provided by universities and the practical realities faced within the dynamic, often unpredictable school environment. This mismatch in professional development highlights a critical gap that needs addressing to enhance teacher preparedness and effectiveness. Teachers, stepping out from the structured, theory-rich corridors of academic institutions, often find themselves in the uncharted waters of diverse classroom settings. The transition is not merely a change in location but a shift to a setting where theoretical knowledge meets the complex, multifaceted world of practical application.

*“What happens at university when I went to Uni., is totally disconnected from what happens in the classroom. I think 4 years is appropriate. We are professionals, we need to learn. . . , and we get paid as professional. So, it has to have a degree of uniqueness about it. But since COVID, I think a lot of universities, have used that as an opportunity to cut their staffing back and do everything online rather than actually in the classroom. I think there’s a bit more about child development and brain development. And there’s very*



*little on trauma informed practice. I'm certain that there's very little about any type of neurodivergence. And the impact that can have on students, because whether a kid is diagnosed or not, medicated or not, it doesn't make any difference. You've got that kid in the classroom. If you don't know how to deal with [manage] them, you're going to have little chance of success." (Nogy)*

The teachers also expressed a need for more targeted and practical professional development, especially in areas such as behaviour management, special education, and differentiated instruction. There is a noted gap between their pre-service training and the realities faced in the classroom, particularly regarding student diversity and complex needs. This highlights the scarcity and inaccessibility of relevant professional development opportunities for teachers. It also underscores the disconnection between professional development programs and the actual needs of teachers on the ground. Val's reflection resonates with the experiences of many of the other participants who feel underprepared for the challenges they face on the ground. This sentiment underscores a crucial shortfall in current teacher education programs.

*"We get some training, but we don't get all the training that we need and usually when you get training, it's like there might be four spots available and twenty teachers need it so it depends." (Val)*

*"I think there needs to be so much more practical stuff, and much more coordination with schools, not people in departments, because the people who are working in departments haven't been in schools for some of them, you know, decades. It needs to be people on the ground." (Nogy)*

#### Theme 4: Excessive Workload

Excessive administrative tasks and meetings detract from teachers' primary focus on teaching, contributing to stress and reducing overall job satisfaction.

**Excessive Administrative Work:** The teachers often felt overwhelmed by the amount of administrative work required, which takes time away from lesson planning and classroom preparation. Maz described the daily documentation requirements. Lally criticised the irrelevant meetings that consume valuable time.

*"After school every day you have to document all bad behaviours. So, you have to do behaviour reports every single day. Every student that is not following the school rules, you have to write it up and put it in the system. You have to (copy) everybody who needs to know about the bad behaviours, unto the document, and then you have to phone or email the parents about the bad behaviour." (Maz)*

*"When you finish your teaching, you gonna have to sit through hours of boring meetings which don't seem to be very relevant to what you are doing but you have to do it because somebody has to tick a box. We would rather be preparing for our next day rather than sitting there, doing more training, which is not going to help us." (Lally)*

**Impact of Administrative Tasks on Well-Being:** The burden of administrative tasks can significantly impact teachers' well-being, as they struggle to balance these duties with their teaching responsibilities. The teachers noted the added pressures and reported that all the extra tasks impacted their well-being.

*"Well-being has got a lot to do with it, how people perceive you as whether you're doing your job properly. What sort of pressures that you have on you and how you complete what I would see as erroneous extra tasks that once upon a time, the executive staff would do, and now they've put it onto teachers. I think a lot more is expected, since technology is improved. They [school management] expect more from us. They think it's quicker, just because you've got a computer. But it's not necessarily the case, so that made the job more and more and more complex. They think because you've got a computer that means it gives you hours and hours of extra time." (Lally)*

*“When you’re working 60 hours a week and still can’t get on top of things, and you are working in the schools with toxic leadership, toxic staff and everyone’s negative and everyone’s drowning. It doesn’t matter how much you pay someone, if you’re not happy, because the school is crushing you, no amount you are paid... They could offer me 200,000 to go back. I wouldn’t actually go back. No, and it depends on the leadership. But I wouldn’t actually go back for double the salary, because see it’s affecting everyone health and well-being.” (Yaby)*

#### Theme 5: Leadership Quality

The quality of school leadership profoundly affects teacher well-being. Effective leaders foster a supportive environment, while ineffective leaders contribute to stress and dissatisfaction. Teachers reported contrasting experiences with different principals and highlighted how leadership styles can directly impact the overall school environment and, subsequently, teacher morale. Zelon’s recount of a supportive and appreciative leadership in a different educational system illustrates the profound positive effects of good leadership on teacher enthusiasm and performance.

*“When I had a difficult day on Monday, and I’d explained to them [leadership] that it was a difficult day. They actually came in the next day and talked about the behaviour expectations for the students and showed me how their system worked at the school. So that was good.” (Zelon)*

**Effective vs. Ineffective Leadership:** Teachers’ experiences with school leaders vary widely, influencing their job satisfaction and well-being. Ash, a Year 2 Learning Support teacher, recounted both positive and negative experiences.

*“Over my teaching career, I’ve had one boss from hell. I had one boss who we’ve had screaming matches, that everybody hated him. I had another boss who was terrible. She screamed at me, threw me out of her office and slammed the door one day. And there was another boss who wasn’t good. He would just bareface lie to you, and there have been other bosses who have been really good. In this school, I can go and talk to my principal, and I talk to the AP and other members of the executive.” (Ash)*

Esan, a teacher with a composite class, contrasts her deputy’s unprofessional behaviour with her principal’s supportive approach.

*“My deputy is known as not very professional. She can be quite horrible sometimes and quite demeaning. Makes you feel stupid. I hope she doesn’t come back because she doesn’t have a good way with staff at all, and micro manages really everything that we do. But again, we have the new principal, who is a lovely person.” (Esan)*

**Pressure on Leadership from Higher Authorities:** The participants also reported that school leaders often face pressure from higher authorities, which can filter down to teachers, increasing their workload and stress levels.

*“Maybe if there wasn’t as much pressure on principals to do a certain paperwork. I know one of the reasons why the teachers are expected to do a lot more administration is because principals are expected to do more. ... Yes, and you know there’s a lot of box ticking in teaching and running schools that I think makes for extra work.” (Lally)*

#### Theme 6: Societal Perception and Influence

The participants reported that societal perceptions and expectations significantly impact teacher well-being. A lack of societal appreciation for teachers and evolving student behaviours influenced by broader societal trends pose additional challenges.

**Lack of Societal Appreciation for Teachers:** Teachers reported feeling undervalued by members of society, who often fail to recognise the challenges and demands of the profession.

*“There’s a mental and emotional toll, and all those clowns out there that say that teachers have too much holidays, and we say yes but we kind of work on the holidays, but I can guarantee you that if we didn’t have a break at the end of 10 weeks. Most teachers are*

*feeling burnt out at the end of 10 weeks. And it's not so many that would come back. We actually need that break time to rest and recuperate, spend time with family and get energy again to go to the next term. And also, of course, the planning (for) next term so you can hit the ground running, because if you stop and stay [lag] behind you never catch up." (Sore)*

*"[Previously] teachers could be the authority, and you had to listen to them. You did because that was what was expected in society, whereas now a 4 years old will just stand up to you and say no." (Lally)*

### **Parental Involvement and Expectations**

Teachers reported experiencing varied levels of parental involvement, which significantly impacted their teaching experience and student outcomes. While supportive parent–teacher relationships can enhance the educational process, unrealistic expectations or negative interactions can add stress and hinder teacher well-being. This reflects the mixed experiences teachers have with parental involvement, highlighting the need for strategies to foster positive relationships. It also illustrates the challenges and pressures teachers face due to parental expectations and the school administration's responses.

*"I think to the most part, parents, unless they've got their own agendas, are quite good. It's just the minority that cause havoc." (Jadin)*

*"More recently, there's been a greater increase in parent complaints, and principals acting on those compliant when they have not necessarily founded anything. Principals will do almost anything to appease the parents while once upon a time, when I was at school, parents had no say in anything. Now parents have all these say without having any of the experience. They don't see what their child is like when they're in the classroom, and they also don't realise that we have to use professional judgment sometimes. That means it's not about academics, it's about the child's emotional and social development." (Lally)*

*"Some parents are really difficult, while some parents are really good parents. They support you." (Zem)*

### **Theme 7: Support Systems**

Teacher well-being is significantly influenced by the support systems in place within the school environment. This theme encompasses both leadership support and collegial support, highlighting the importance of a strong support network for teachers.

**Leadership Support:** Leadership plays a crucial role in determining teacher well-being. The quality of school leadership profoundly affects teacher well-being. Effective leaders foster a supportive environment, while ineffective leaders contribute to stress and dissatisfaction. Effective leaders provide necessary support, enhancing teachers' overall job satisfaction and reducing stress levels. For instance, Val, a Year 1 teacher, emphasised the impact of leadership on her well-being.

*"My well-being goes up and down. A lot of them come down to support, so if I've got lots of support my well-being is really good, I feel healthy and active... but if I don't have any support my well-being goes down because I feel that I am trying to do the job of 24 people and it's just one person." (Val)*

Nogy, an Assistant Principal, confirmed Val's sentiments. She also highlighted the negative impact of poor leadership:

*"As a leader, the well-being of my staff is one of my absolute top priorities. . . , how well they face the challenges, and whether those challenges for them, are at home or at school. I need to help them take care of their well-being and be aware of where they're at with their well-being, because. If they're at their best, then they can cope with those challenges. . . I need to support them in both those realms, because ultimately, I mean, I care about them as people I want them to be happy outside of work. But you know, if we get down to the nitty-gritty of it, I want them to be at their best, so they could perform well, and we can get the best for our kids. "I'll have to say this year is very different. Well-being*

*is different with a different principal, who is much less organised, much less focus on communication with staff. I don't agree with her ideas around staff development and those sorts of things."* (Nogy)

**Collegial Support:** Support from colleagues is equally considered to be vital. The teachers reported that they often rely on each other for emotional and professional support, creating a collaborative and supportive work environment. Saks noted the importance of sharing ideas and planning collaboratively. Similarly, Val appreciated the immediate support she received from her colleagues during challenging moments.

*"Support from other colleagues is really good, has improved to a place where we are sharing ideas, we are sharing planning. It's not just one person keeping your planning to yourself. So yeah, it makes it a bit easier to bounce back the ideas."* (Saks)

*"They can hear my classroom getting really loud and stuff and often you know, they'll pop their head in and they can take some of the other children while I calm the kids down or they'll calm the kids down. So, I feel supported."* (Val)

**Union Support:** Teacher unions play a crucial role in advocating for better working conditions and well-being. Some participants reported that unions provide essential support to teachers, helping them navigate difficult situations and advocating for their rights. Nogy, a union representative, explained her role and the value of the Teachers' Union. However, some other teachers did not feel well-supported by the union.

*"If there are issues that staff have at school, they can come to me to find out what they should do. If someone is having a tough time, or they've got a conversation they want to have with a principal or someone else that is a bit difficult."* (Nogy)

*"I'm not a member of the Union, they stated that I'm not a financial member, so they can't help me. And that even if I became a financial member, they can't help with things that happened before."* (Sey)

**Well-Being Policies:** The participants also reported that the presence of well-being policies and dedicated well-being units within schools can provide essential support to teachers.

*"So, we've got a well-being unit different from the education support unit. The support unit was very helpful. They set up a thing called the Red Phone, and (you can) call when things get out of hand, and they would come."* (Saks)

However, not all well-being policies are perceived as beneficial. There is often a disconnection between policy decisions and the practical realities of the classroom. For example, Lally criticised a committee formed post-COVID, intended to support well-being but ended up adding more workload, while Nogy criticised the lack of understanding among policymakers.

*"I think since COVID we had a committee. The reason I actually was on that committee was because I thought it was for staff well-being. It was actually (for) the children . . . Anyway, those committees just actually create more work for people, as far as I'm concerned, I don't think we need them. I just think it just creates more work for principals. There's a lot of work that goes into it, and also the staffing is not there at the moment to be able to implement these programs. It's all very hit and miss."* (Lally)

*"Some of those people who are high up in the department, some of these are 10 years younger than me... they have no idea what's going on inside of the classroom."* (Nogy)

#### Theme 8: Feeling Valued and Appreciated

Feeling valued and appreciated was reported as a cornerstone of teacher well-being. The teachers stated that they thrive in environments where their efforts are recognised and valued by both leadership and the school community.

**Recognition by Leadership:** When school leaders actively show appreciation and recognise teachers' hard work, it positively impacts their well-being. Giks, a Year 2 teacher, shared his positive experience of a supportive environment.

*“When I went to the Catholic system, and this is a school with 1500 students. I had within a month, I already had 4 cups of tea with the principal. Where he comes to the staff room, sits down, and asks about your life. And the assistant principals and all the people top-down take time to try to get to know who you are, what you’re interested in. Going to work there is a joy. They have high expectations. You rise to them because they honestly appreciate your efforts.” (Giks)*

**Impact of Educational Background:** Leaders with a background in psychology or similar fields often have a deeper understanding of how to make staff feel valued. Lally reflected on a principal with a psychology degree who excelled in making staff feel appreciated.

*“That principal I had first had a psychology degree (and) was able to make staff feel valued as part of the school community, and she would protect you. She would write little notes and say what you’ve done well or what she appreciated, or that sort of thing.” (Lally)*

#### Theme 9: Teacher Job Satisfaction

Teacher job satisfaction is closely linked to their passion for teaching and the relationships they build with their students. Positive interactions with students and a sense of fulfilment in their roles contribute significantly to teacher well-being.

**Love for Teaching:** Many teachers enter the profession because of their passion for teaching and their desire to make a difference in students’ lives. Raba shared her enthusiasm for the teaching profession:

*“I think that teaching is a unique career. I like the challenge of new students every year. Knowing who they are and then how you have to teach them. . .” (Raba)*

**Impact of Student Relationships:** Building strong relationships with students is a key driver of job satisfaction for teachers. Lally and Maz noted that working with children is a primary reason many teachers stay in the profession.

*“I think the part that most teachers get into the job for is the part where you work with children.”*

*“Because I think I make connections with the children, and I think I’m good at my job. I think I’ll help them to reach their potential or at least see their value as good citizens. I think I made their day good. . . I suppose getting through the day, I’m trying my best and helping them get to their potential.” (Maz)*

## 4. Discussion

This study provides deep insights into the classroom and school-related factors that impact teachers’ occupational well-being. These insights not only shed light on the complexities of teaching but also highlight systemic issues within the educational environment.

The study findings reveal that teachers navigate a myriad of multifaceted challenges that contribute to their occupational well-being and highlight the dynamic nature of teaching as an intertwining of art and science. Effective classroom management and the ability to tailor instructional strategies to meet diverse student needs are critical for maintaining a positive learning environment and enhancing teacher well-being [41]. The findings corroborate previous studies that highlight the importance of differentiated instruction and understanding student learning needs in promoting teacher efficacy and satisfaction [41,42].

Previous research has suggested that it is important to be intentional about integrating relationship building into teaching [43]. The significant effort required for individualised instruction underscores the emotional and physical toll on teachers striving to meet diverse student needs. This finding resonates with the work of Tomlinson and Imbeau [44], who advocate for differentiated instruction but also highlight the challenges teachers face in implementing it effectively. This highlights a need for systemic support in managing differentiated instruction without compromising teacher well-being. Implications for practice include providing teachers with additional support, such as teaching assistants and access to resources, to facilitate personalised learning. Professional development opportunities should focus on practical strategies for differentiation that do not overwhelm teachers [41].

Behavioural challenges and inadequate resources are major stressors for teachers. The findings align with the literature on teacher stress, which identifies student behaviour and resource limitations as significant contributors to teacher burnout [45,46]. The increasing diversity of student needs, coupled with insufficient support, creates a challenging teaching environment that can negatively impact teacher well-being. The emotional highs and lows experienced by teachers can be as varied and intense as the crescendos and decrescendos in a musical piece, underscoring the need for emotional support and understanding within the educational ecosystem. The fluctuating teacher well-being tied to classroom dynamics aligns with prior research indicating that classroom management is a significant stressor for teachers [47]. The emotional labour teachers invest in creating positive learning environments suggests a need for more robust behavioural support systems within schools. The implementation of school-wide behaviour management programs and the incorporation of social-emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum have been shown to improve classroom behaviour and reduce teacher stress [48].

There is a noticeable gap between teachers' training and the realities of classroom challenges. The need for more practical, ongoing professional development is evident, particularly in areas like special education, behaviour management, and trauma-informed teaching. The teachers' expressed frustration in relation to the mismatch between their educational training and the realities in the school environment highlights the necessity for training programs to incorporate real-world teaching experiences, closely aligning academic preparation with the practical demands of contemporary classrooms. The disconnection between university training and the reality on the ground manifests in various ways, from managing diverse student needs to implementing effective behavioural strategies and differentiating instruction in inclusive settings. Addressing this divide requires a collaborative, multidimensional approach. Universities should foster partnerships with schools to provide preservice teachers with hands-on experiences and mentorship opportunities that reflect the realities of modern educational environments. Simultaneously, ongoing professional development should be tailored to bridge gaps in knowledge and skills, adapting to the evolving landscape of education. In crafting a future where teachers are better prepared, the words of Darling-Hammond et al. [49] serve as a guiding light: "Professional learning in the learning profession". This vision calls for an education system where continuous learning and adaptation bridge the gap between academic preparation and classroom realities, ensuring that teachers are not just survivors of the divide but navigators of the educational journey.

Excessive administrative tasks and meetings detract from teachers' primary focus on teaching, contributing to stress and reducing overall job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with research indicating that administrative workload is a major source of teacher stress and burnout [50,51]. Teachers in this study expressed frustration over the time-consuming nature of administrative duties, which detracts from their ability to plan and deliver effective lessons. As articulated by the teachers in this study, the sheer volume and intensity of administrative demands often extend well into personal time, leading to stress, burnout, and a pervasive sense of being submerged by professional obligations. The participants' experiences suggest that effective, supportive, and communicative leadership is crucial for fostering a positive school climate and, consequently, teacher satisfaction. The critical role of school leadership in influencing teacher well-being echoes the findings of Leithwood et al. [52], who note the direct correlation between leadership style and teacher satisfaction. It is therefore important to train school leaders in effective communication and support strategies, to foster a positive school culture, and ensure that leaders are approachable and responsive to teachers' needs. Teachers expressed a desire for greater professional trust and autonomy in their instructional decisions. Excessive micromanagement and prescriptive policies can undermine teacher efficacy and satisfaction [53].

The constraints posed by inadequate resources reflect broader systemic issues within education funding and allocation. Scarcity of resources does not only hamper educational quality but also contributes to teacher stress, pointing to an urgent need for better resource



allocation strategies. This finding is consistent with the study by Perry and McConney [54] and Thompson et al. [55], which link resource availability to teacher efficacy and student outcomes. Senior management needs to advocate for increased educational funding from the government and ensure that resources are distributed equitably and efficiently to meet classroom needs. For professional development, educational institutions should ensure that training opportunities are readily available, practical, and aligned with the challenges teachers face in modern classrooms [56]. Collaboration between educators and training providers could help tailor professional development programs to meet specific needs, enhancing their relevance and effectiveness.

The quality of school leadership profoundly affects teacher well-being. Effective leaders create supportive environments that enhance job satisfaction, while ineffective leaders contribute to stress and dissatisfaction. These findings are supported by the literature that emphasises the role of leadership in shaping school climate and teacher morale [57,58]. The overwhelming workloads and administrative burdens revealed in this study underscore the prevalent issue of excessive non-teaching workload faced by teachers, which encroaches on planning time and personal well-being. Research by Skaalvik and Skaalvik [59], Bakker et al. [60], and Albulescu and Tuşer [61] support this finding, associating high workload with increased teacher burnout. This indicates a critical need for workload management and streamlining administrative tasks, providing time within the school day for planning and collaboration and respecting teachers' personal time.

Studies in the past have argued that the principal's support is very critical to teacher well-being as it has proven to have a significant influence on teachers' engagement and motivation [62–64] and has the greatest impact in reducing the risk of experiencing burnout as well as increasing job satisfaction [65,66]. Previous research has emphasised the need for leadership to be sensitive to teachers' well-being especially when implementing school reforms [67]. Similarly, interactions with parents emerged as a double-edged sword, where positive engagement can support teaching efforts, but negative encounters or unrealistic expectations can add to teacher stress [68]. This suggests a need for establishing stronger, more constructive communication channels between teachers and parents. Schools could implement programs or workshops that educate parents on effective ways to support their children's education and foster a cooperative relationship between home and school. Establishing clear communication channels and setting boundaries may also help manage expectations and reduce potential conflicts.

Societal perceptions and expectations significantly impact teacher well-being. The lack of societal appreciation for teachers and evolving student behaviours influenced by broader societal trends pose additional challenges. This aligns with research highlighting the impact of societal attitudes on teacher morale and the increasing complexity of student behaviour [69,70]. Teachers in this study expressed frustration over societal misconceptions about their workload and the lack of respect for their profession.

The importance of support systems for teacher well-being cannot be overstated. Leadership and collegial support emerged as crucial elements in determining teachers' overall job satisfaction and stress levels. Previous research underscores the significance of supportive leadership in enhancing teacher well-being [71,72]. The data from this study align with these findings, highlighting that effective leadership fosters a positive work environment, while poor leadership exacerbates stress and dissatisfaction. The role of well-being policies, although mixed in their effectiveness, suggests that targeted support structures can significantly impact teacher morale and well-being [29]. Teacher unions play a crucial role in advocating for better working conditions and well-being, while policy decisions by educational authorities can significantly affect the teaching environment. The findings suggest that unions provide essential support and advocacy, consistent with the literature on the role of unions in promoting teacher welfare [73,74]. However, the disconnection between policy decisions and classroom realities remains a significant challenge, highlighting the need for greater collaboration between policymakers and practising teachers.

Feeling valued and appreciated by leadership and the broader school community is vital for teachers. This study's findings resonate with the existing literature, which emphasises that recognition and appreciation are key motivators for teachers [75,76]. Teachers who feel acknowledged for their efforts report higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment. The impact of educational background, particularly leaders with psychology degrees, further underscores the need for empathetic and supportive leadership in fostering a sense of value among teachers.

Job satisfaction among teachers is closely linked to their passion for teaching and the relationships they build with students. This aligns with the self-determination theory, which posits that intrinsic motivation and relatedness are crucial for job satisfaction [77]. The findings highlight that teachers derive significant satisfaction from their interactions with students and their ability to positively impact students' lives, consistent with existing research [78].

#### *4.1. Link with the OECD Framework*

The themes identified in this study directly intersect with the outcome variables outlined in the OECD framework for classroom processes and school factors [2]. The findings from this study show that teachers' well-being is being majorly impacted by school-related factors. The theme on individualised student needs in the classroom relates closely to the OECD's emphasis on Teachers' Active Support towards Students. Our findings suggest that teachers' efforts to provide individualised help and adapt their teaching practices to meet diverse student needs are both crucial and challenging. This active support is essential for fostering student engagement but also demands a high level of emotional and cognitive investment from teachers, influencing their professional satisfaction and well-being. Our results also capture the essence of the Classroom Social Climate and Teacher Cooperation aspects of the OECD framework. The emotional dynamics within the classroom significantly impact the social climate, which is foundational for effective learning environments. Additionally, the cooperation among teachers, as they share strategies and support one another in managing these dynamics, is crucial for sustaining a positive working atmosphere and enhancing collective efficacy.

The results also emphasise the need for professional development that prepares teachers to effectively handle classroom challenges, including managing classes with behavioural problems and special needs. The disconnection between university training and the practical realities of diverse classroom compositions can lead to increased stress and decreased job satisfaction, underscoring the need for targeted training and support systems. The issues of workload and parental involvement directly correlate with the Workload and Multiple Roles variables from the OECD framework [2]. The overwhelming workload encompassing planning, meetings, marking, and additional roles such as counselling students, communicating with parents, and engaging in school management significantly impacts teachers' work-life balance and well-being. The narrative of teachers struggling with these demands highlights the critical need for workload management strategies and better distribution of responsibilities within schools. Additionally, managing disruptive behaviour is an integral and stressful part of the teacher's role [65], which affects both classroom climate and teacher well-being. Effective management of such behaviours is essential for maintaining an environment conducive to learning and teacher satisfaction.

The interconnections between the themes identified in this study and the OECD framework variables reveal a complex picture of the factors influencing teacher well-being. These links underscore the necessity for policies and practices that address these issues holistically [2]. Solutions may include enhancing teacher preparation programs [79,80], implementing supportive school leadership practices, restructuring workload and responsibilities, and fostering positive classroom and school climates [2]. By addressing these areas, educational institutions can significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning environments, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students.

#### 4.2. Implications for Practice

Overall, our study findings emphasise the importance of viewing teacher well-being not as a static condition to be achieved but as a dynamic process influenced by a myriad of factors. It highlights the need for systemic changes that address the realities of the classroom and the well-being of those at its heart—the teachers [81]. These underline the critical need for a supportive school culture that acknowledges the complex realities of teaching. They call for professional development programs that are not only practical and relevant but also sensitive to the emotional and cognitive demands placed on teachers. Furthermore, the findings suggest that school leadership should act as supportive maestros, guiding and assisting teachers in navigating the complexities of their roles [62,63,82]. Schools could explore more efficient ways of conducting meetings, perhaps adopting a flipped approach where informational content is provided in advance, freeing meeting time for interactive discussion or collaborative planning. Additionally, reassessing the necessity and frequency of certain tasks could alleviate some of the pressures teachers face. Addressing the “overwhelming waves of workload” is not merely about reducing the number of tasks teachers perform; it is about fundamentally rethinking how schools operate to ensure that teachers can focus on what they do best—teaching and inspiring students. By acknowledging and tackling the excessive burdens placed on educators, we can move towards creating more sustainable, fulfilling teaching environments that benefit teachers and students alike [10,11,83]. Furthermore, the narrative calls for a paradigm shift in teacher education and professional development—one that harmonises the theoretical with the practical, ensuring that the journey from academic halls to classroom walls is not a leap into the unknown but a seamless step into preparedness. The implications for practice are profound. By integrating real-world experiences and feedback from practising teachers into the curriculum, teacher education programs can evolve to produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable in theory but also adept in practice. This alignment between training and practice is vital for equipping teachers with the tools necessary to navigate the complexities of their profession effectively.

Ultimately, this study serves as a call to action for a renewed focus on the well-being of teachers, who are at the heart of the educational process [7,84]. By nurturing the well-being of teachers, we can ensure a more positive, productive, and enriching learning experience for all students [8], paving the way for a brighter educational future. Future research could consider the evolving nature of educational challenges. By continuing to explore and address the factors impacting teacher well-being, stakeholders can work towards creating more supportive, effective, and fulfilling educational environments for teachers and students alike.

#### 4.3. Strengths and Limitations

A notable strength of this study is its qualitative methodology, which facilitates a deep understanding of complex emotional and psychological experiences that quantitative methods might overlook. This approach allows for the capture of diverse teacher perspectives, enhancing the comprehensiveness and depth of the findings. Furthermore, the holistic exploration of both classroom and school-wide factors offers a broad view of the ecosystem affecting teacher well-being. This comprehensive perspective is invaluable for policymakers, administrators, and educators aiming to create more supportive and effective educational environments.

However, the study is not without its limitations. The findings, while insightful, may not be applicable across all educational contexts or regions, thereby limiting the study’s broader applicability. Subjectivity also poses a limitation, as the phenomenological method relies heavily on personal interpretations—both by the participants in expressing their experiences and by the researchers in analysing these narratives. Additionally, there was only one male participant and this could further limit the study’s broader applicability. Participants’ potential response bias is another concern, as participants may have withheld negative experiences or provided socially desirable responses. Despite these limitations, the

study contributes valuable perspectives to the ongoing discourse on teacher occupational well-being and suggests avenues for further research and practical interventions.

## 5. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study offers significant insights into the complex landscape of teacher well-being, shedding light on the intricate interplay between classroom processes and school factors. Through the voices of teachers, the research illuminates the emotional and practical challenges educators face, highlighting the impact of diverse student needs, classroom dynamics, leadership styles, resource availability, workload, and parental involvement on their occupational well-being. The findings underscore the necessity for a holistic approach to addressing teacher well-being, emphasising the need for supportive leadership, adequate resources, manageable workloads, and positive parent-teacher relationships. These elements are not isolated but interwoven, contributing to the overall health of the educational ecosystem. As such, improving teacher well-being requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders in the educational community, including policymakers, administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

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**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in this study.

**Data Availability Statement:** The dataset is available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author (JN).

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## Appendix A. Semi-Structured Interview Guide

- What does well-being mean to you?
- What is your ideal experience of well-being at work?
- Are you aware of any policy/policies in place for your well-being at your workplace?
- What national policy is available to help teachers with their well-being?
- From when you started working, how happy are you with the work you do?
- Describe your experience of job satisfaction.
- To what extent do you enjoy working with children?
- Can you describe your relationship with your students?
- How far do you enjoy the diverse and unexpected challenges that your role brings?
- To what extent do you believe that you have the necessary/formal training required to facilitate quality learning and address the diverse educational needs of the learners in your classroom?
- What factors impact your classroom teaching? (e.g., diverse children's educational needs, workload, size of the class, resources, support, etc)?
- In your opinion, how do you think that teaching in the classroom impacts your occupational well-being? (Cognitive, subjective, physical/mental and social well-being)
- Have you experienced any health issues as a result of teaching? If yes, please elaborate.

- With regards to organisational support, tell me how well the school supports you.
- How would you describe your relationships with leadership/management?
- How would you describe your dealings /relationships with colleagues?
- To what extent do you feel supported by your other colleagues and school administrators (other school stakeholders)?
- Do you always have someone to go to at work when you need to talk about your problems? Why? Why not?
- What are the formal structures and systems in place that provide you with helpful support when needed?
- Recap.
- Is there any other matter on this topic that we haven't covered but you would like to discuss?

### Appendix B. Characteristics of the Participants

Name	Year Level	Number in Class	School Type	Years of Experience in Primary	Teaching Role
Ash	Prep-2	25	Private	30	Learning Support Coordinator
Esan	2/3	27	Public	6	Classroom Teacher
Giks	2	18	Private	11	Classroom Teacher
Jadin	4/5/6	18	Public	25	Classroom Teacher
Lally	3	21	Public	14	Classroom Teacher
Maz	5	26	Catholic	27	Classroom Teacher
Mira	2	16	Public	6	Intensive English Teacher
Nath	1-6	25	Public	25	Learning Support Teacher
Nogy	1-2	14	Public	26	Assistant Principal/Union Representative
Penny	4/5	7	Public	9	Distance Education Teacher
Raba	5	25	Public	10	Classroom Teacher
Saks	3	17	Private	10	Classroom Teacher
Sey	6	25	Catholic	13	Inclusion Support Coordinator
Sod	Prep-6	25	Public	25	Assistant Principal
Sore	6	28	Public	7	Classroom Teacher
Tak	4/5/6	14	Private	4	Intensive English Teacher
Val	1	24	Public	12	Classroom Teacher
Wet	3-6	28	Public	18	Specialist Teacher (Digital Technology)
Yaby	3	30	Catholic	15	Classroom Teacher
Zelon	3	41 (2 teachers)	Private	35	Intensive English Teacher
Zem	Prep	10	Private	3	Classroom Teacher

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