

La demografía y la satisfacción laboral como predictores del bienestar mental de los docentes Filipinos: Una encuesta basada en la web dos años después del inicio de la pandemia

Demographics and job satisfaction as predictors of mental well-being of Filipino teachers: A web-based survey two years after the onset of pandemic

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RESUMEN

Los docentes de todo el mundo han tenido que cambiar su forma de trabajar debido a la crisis sanitaria de la COVID-19. Estos cambios laborales y los desafíos de la pandemia han afectado a los docentes de una forma u otra. Es necesario investigar el bienestar de los docentes y su grado de satisfacción con sus trabajos dos años después del inicio de la pandemia y el confinamiento a nivel nacional. Este estudio examinó los factores que predicen el bienestar mental subjetivo de los docentes en Filipinas. Utilizando un diseño de estudio transversal, se analizaron las respuestas de la encuesta de 218 profesores filipinos. Los datos se recopilaron electrónicamente utilizando el formulario de perfil demográfico, una versión corta de la Escala de Bienestar Mental de Warwick-Edimburgo y el Índice Corto de Satisfacción Laboral. Los resultados indicaron que la mayoría de los docentes tenían una satisfacción laboral entre media y alta y un bienestar mental subjetivo medio. El análisis de regresión reveló que el tipo de escuela empleada, la residencia y la satisfacción laboral eran predictores significativos del bienestar mental de los docentes. Este estudio afirma que determinadas variables demográficas y la satisfacción en el trabajo ejercen una influencia positiva en la salud mental de los docentes. Es vital mejorar continuamente las condiciones laborales de los docentes e idear formas de mejorar su bienestar.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Satisfacción laboral; salud mental; Filipinas; profesores; bienestar.

ABSTRACT

Teachers worldwide have had to change how they work because of the COVID-19 health crisis. These work changes and pandemic challenges have affected teachers in one way or another. There is a need to investigate teachers' welfare and how contented they are with their jobs two years after the onset of the pandemic and nationwide lockdown. This study examined the factors predicting the subjective mental well-being of teachers in the Philippines. Using a cross-sectional study design, the survey responses of 218 Filipino teachers were analyzed. Data were gathered electronically using the demographic profile form, a short version of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale, and the Short Index of Job Satisfaction. Results indicated that the majority of teachers had average to high job satisfaction and average subjective mental well-being. Regression analysis revealed that the

type of school employed, residence, and job satisfaction were significant predictors of the mental well-being of teachers. This study affirms that certain demographic variables and satisfaction at work exert a positive influence on the mental health of teachers. Continuously making improvements in the working conditions of teachers and devising ways to enhance their well-being are vital.

KEY WORDS

Job satisfaction, mental health, Philippines, teachers, well-being.

1. INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness and efficacy of teachers in educational environments critically shape societal advancement, with students deriving the most direct benefits. Central to this influence is the mental well-being of educators, a lack of which hinders the creation of optimal learning conditions (Aliakbari, 2015). The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has radically altered professional practices and environments, negatively affecting not just students (Annamalai, 2021) but also educators and academic staff worldwide (Min et al., 2021). The teaching profession, already known for high stress and a propensity for psychosomatic issues more than other professions (Vargas-Rubilar & Oros, 2021; Wettstein et al., 2021), has been further challenged by these shifts. Notably, the transition to modular and online teaching methods has exacerbated the demands of this profession (Stang-Rabrig et al., 2022). This evolving scenario has heightened concerns about job satisfaction and educators' physical and mental health (Lulli et al., 2021). Additionally, the correlation between psychosocial and occupational stressors and changes in job satisfaction has significant implications for the well-being of teachers (Wischlitzki et al., 2020). Unaddressed, these stressors pose substantial risks to teachers' mental health, potentially increasing attrition rates due to stress and deteriorating psychological well-being (Gomez, 2022).

Considering the global issue of teacher shortages, it becomes crucial to pay closer attention to teacher job satisfaction and well-being (Toropova et al., 2021). Workforce attrition associated with job satisfaction is among the leading concerns of school leaders and policymakers in several countries, including the Philippines (Sapar & Oducado, 2021). In the academe, job satisfaction, among other factors, has contributed to poor mental wellness and educators' turnover intention (Madigan & Kim, 2021). Recent studies suggest that schools must consider educators' job satisfaction or "happiness at work" to enhance their holistic well-being (Sudibjo & Manihuruk, 2022). There is robust evidence that job satisfaction and mental well-being have determined the effectiveness of teaching-learning practices in various academic contexts and positively impact student achievements (Hoque et al., 2023; Madigan & Kim, 2021; Ortan et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, nationwide lockdowns were implemented in response to the pandemic. In the Philippines, the first lockdown started on March 2020 (UNICEF Philippines, 2020). The community quarantine led to a global shift in schools towards remote and hybrid learning models. The transition towards emergency remote learning modality has disrupted traditional classroom instruction and management (Gajda et al., 2021; Oducado et al., 2021), significantly affecting the teaching profession worldwide. Filipino teachers, like their global counterparts, have had to adapt to these changes, grappling with challenges in managing administrative responsibilities amid rapidly evolving circumstances. As a result, stress levels among educators have escalated, raising concerns about the quality of life, job satisfaction, and mental well-being (Lin et al., 2021; Lulli et al., 2021; Oducado et al., 2021; Rabacal et al., 2020; Vargas-Rubilar & Oros, 2021). Previous studies indicate that these changes in the education sector have adversely impacted teacher job satisfaction and mental well-being during the pandemic. This situation highlights the growing need to assess and address educators' job satisfaction and mental well-being. However, there remains a dearth of studies examining these variables among Filipino teachers two years after the pandemic's onset.

With teachers as the primary backbone of the education system, their job satisfaction and mental well-being are vital to the overall well-being of the educational system. Understanding the factors that affect job satisfaction and mental well-being is essential to promote a healthy and

productive teaching workforce. Several studies have investigated job satisfaction and mental well-being among teachers. For instance, studies in Italy and Iran found job satisfaction positively associated with teachers' mental health and well-being (Capone & Petrillo, 2020; Aliakbari, 2015). In the Philippines, studies found that most teachers were generally satisfied with their jobs despite the challenges in the education sector (Atencio, 2019; Pilarta, 2015). Yet, these studies occurred before the COVID-19 outbreak, and findings may not reflect the current situation, potentially rendering their conclusions outdated considering the current circumstances. Some scholars have warned about the possible long-term psychological sequelae and the existence of a mental health crisis after the COVID-19 pandemic (Ellyatt, 2022; Min et al., 2021; Rabacal et al., 2020). In addition, while demographic factors do not necessarily determine a person's mental health outcomes, some prior research conducted elsewhere noted that variables such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and geographic location have an impact on mental health (Alcañiz et al., 2020; Cleofas, 2022; Flores et al., 2022; Hidalgo-Andrade et al., 2021; Reiss et al., 2019).

In light of the above, this study examines Filipino teachers' job satisfaction and mental well-being two years after the nationwide lockdown and pandemic. It also aims to determine whether selected demographic factors and job satisfaction influence the subjective mental well-being of teachers. This study aims to contribute to the current literature on teacher job satisfaction and mental well-being, particularly in the context of the unprecedented changes brought by the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector. In addition, this study can provide evidence-based recommendations for promoting job satisfaction and mental well-being among Filipino teachers geared towards enhanced educational outcomes.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Study Design, Participants, and Data Gathering

This study used a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational design involving the analysis of survey responses of 218 Filipino-employed teachers presently enrolled in the graduate program of the College of Education in a state-funded university in the Philippines. For the sample size requirement, a-priori sample size calculator for multiple regression suggested that 113 was the minimum required sample size, given a.05 probability level, nine predictor variables in the model, a.15 anticipated effect size, and a.80 desired statistical power level. Data were gathered electronically from the end of March to the second week of April 2022. Google Forms serves as the platform for both survey creation and data collection. Our study adhered to the regulations outlined in the Data Privacy Act of the country and followed ethical standards for academic research. Permission from the administrative head was obtained before the actual data gathering. The complete details of the study and consent to participate were presented on the first page of the survey form. The anonymity of respondents and confidentiality of the answers were maintained throughout the study.

2.2. Study Instruments

The Short Index of Job Satisfaction (SIJS) and the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (SWEMWS) were the main research instruments used. The researchers were granted permission to use the instruments. The SIJS measured the global job satisfaction of teachers. The SIJS from the work of Sinval and Marôco (2020) had five items, however, for this study, only four items were used. The item "Each day at work seems like it will never end" was deleted for the scale to have an acceptable Cronbach's alpha of .752. Each item on the SIJS was answerable on a five-point Likert scale "Strongly Disagree-1" to "Strongly Agree-5", with one item ("I consider my job to be rather unpleasant") being reversely scored. We used Bloom's cut-off points cited by Seid and Hussen (2018) to categorize the scores in the SIJS: high if the score was >80% (16-20 points), average if the score was 60-79% (12-15 points), and <59% (4 to 11 points). This study utilized the SWEMWS of the NHS Health Scotland, the University of Warwick, and the University of Edinburgh (2008) to measure subjective mental well-being. The 7-item SWEMWS had a 5-point Likert scale response option ranging from "None of the time-1" to "All of the time-5." The raw scores were transformed to metric scores using the conversion table and were categorized as

follows: “7 to 20–low”, “21 to 27–average”, and “28 to 35–high” (Stewart Brown et al., 2008; Egcas et al., 2021). The SWEMWS had acceptable internal consistency among Filipino samples (Cleofas & Oducado, 2021; Egcas et al., 2021). For this present study, the Cronbach’s alpha was.864. The age, gender (male, female), location of residence (city, town), marital status (single, married), type of schools where teachers are currently employed (public, private), degree program (doctoral, masters), and COVID-19 vaccination status (fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated, unvaccinated) were also collected. Teachers were also asked if they occupy supervisory or administrative positions, answerable by “yes or no.”

2.3. Statistical Data Analysis

To ascertain the profile of the respondents and levels of job satisfaction and mental well-being, we used frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. It was suggested that 100 participants would be acceptable for parametric comparisons (Campo-Arias et al., 2021). Hence, Pearson’s correlation and t-test for Independent Samples were used to test the association between the independent and dependent variables. Step-wise regression analysis was used to identify predictors, and a p-value of .05 was accepted as significant. The IBM SPSS version 26 was used for statistical analysis.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents were younger (60.6%), females (77.5%), residing in towns (65.6%), single (69.3%), teaching in government schools (68.3%), without supervisory or administrative position (66.1%), enrolled in the master’s degree program (68.3%) and has received COVID vaccination (98.6%).

Table 1. Profile of teachers.

Profile	f	%
Age [M=30.36, SD=7.43]		
Older (31 and above)	86	39.4
Younger (30 and below)	132	60.6
Gender		
Male	49	22.5
Female	169	77.5
Residence		
Town	143	65.6
City	75	34.4
Marital status		
Single	151	69.3
Married	67	30.7
Type of school employed		
Private school	69	31.7
Government school	149	68.3

Profile	f	%
Supervisory position		
Yes	74	33.9
No	144	66.1
Degree program		
Doctoral	69	31.7
Masters	149	68.3
Vaccination status		
Fully vaccinated	215	98.6
Unvaccinated and incompletely vaccinated	3	1.4

Table 2 shows that 49.1% and 41.7% of the teachers had average and high job satisfaction, respectively. Moreover, while 59.2% had average subjective mental well-being, 20.2% posted low mental well-being.

Table 2. Level of job satisfaction and mental well-being.

Level	F	%
Job satisfaction (M=15.22, 2.87)		
High (16-20)	107	49.1
Average (12-15)	91	41.7
Low (4-11)	20	9.2
Mental wellbeing (M=24.73, SD=4.09)		
High (28-35)	45	20.6
Average (21-27)	129	59.2
Low (7-20)	44	20.2

The t-test for independent samples in Table 3 shows that teachers' subjective mental well-being significantly differs based on age ($t=-2.478, p=.014$), gender ($t=2.258, p=.025$), location of residence ($t=2.158, p=.032$), type of school they presently work ($t=-2.105, p=.036$), and degree program they are currently enrolled ($t=2.424, p=.016$). Moreover, Pearson's correlation revealed a moderately significant positive relationship ($r=.494, p=.000$) between teachers' job satisfaction and mental well-being.

Table 3. Bivariate analysis of factors associated with mental well-being.

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Profile	M	SD	Test statistics	p-value
Age [†]			-2.478*	.014
Older	25.57	4.02		
Younger	24.18	4.05		
Gender [†]			2.258*	.025
Male	25.88	4.22		
Female	24.39	4.00		
Residence [†]			2.158*	.032
Town	25.16	4.18		
City	23.91	3.78		
Marital status [†]			-.471	.638
Single	24.64	4.13		
Married	24.92	4.01		
Type of school employed [†]			-2.105*	.036
Private school	23.88	4.18		
Government school	25.12	4.00		
Supervisory position [†]			-1.049	.295
Yes	25.13	4.32		
No	24.52	3.96		
Degree program [†]			2.424*	.016
Doctoral	25.70	4.18		
Masters	24.28	3.98		
Job satisfaction ^{††}			.494*	.000

Note: * $p < .05$,[†]t-test for independent samples,^{††}Pearson's r

The result of the multiple regression analysis (Table 4) shows that job satisfaction ($\beta = .346$, $p = .000$), the type of school where teachers are currently employed ($\beta = .988$, $p = .008$), and their location of residence ($\beta = .924$, $p = .012$) were significant predictors explaining 28% of the variance of teachers' mental well-being.

Table 4. Model coefficients.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			
	β	Std. Error	T	p-value
(Constant)		3.771	1.349	2.795 .006
Job satisfaction	.346	.041		8.363 .000
Type of school employed	.988	.371		2.663 .008
Residence	.924	.363		2.544 .012

Note: R Square = .280, F = 27.800, p=.000

4. DISCUSSION

This cross-sectional survey assessed teachers' job satisfaction and subjective mental well-being in the Philippines two years after the onset of pandemic and nationwide lockdown. Mental health professionals say that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health might be long-lasting, extending to a generation (Ellyatt, 2022; Min et al., 2021; Rabacal et al., 2020), and given the global issue of teacher shortages is growing, paying closer attention to teacher job satisfaction and well-being is important (García & Weiss, 2019; Toropova et al., 2021). In this study, researchers found that teachers are generally moderately to highly satisfied with their jobs. This finding conforms with the results of the studies that the majority of the teachers are satisfied or very content with their work and responsibilities in the teaching profession (Atencio, 2019; Pilarta, 2015). Even during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, although teachers have difficulty adjusting to their new work set-up and higher intention to leave their work (Gillani et al., 2022), some reports found that teachers appear to still find fulfillment in their jobs (Glaveli et al., 2023). They still accomplish their goals and hold on to their profession as teachers, not just teachers. Many teachers in the Philippines see their work as a calling rather than just a job (Rogayan, 2018). They view themselves as agents of change who are shaping the future of their students and the country. The opportunity to inspire and educate young minds can be fulfilling for many teachers. Knowing that they are making a difference in the lives of their students can be a source of great satisfaction. These may explain why teaching in the Philippine setting is found to be fulfilling by teachers. However, it is worth noting that not all teachers may be satisfied with their jobs. In some countries and the Philippines as well, there are concerns about the impact of low pay, high workload, increased stress levels, inadequate resources, and demanding working environments (García & Weiss, 2019; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2022; Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology, 2021). However, the reasons above suggest why some teachers in the Philippines may be content with their profession.

The sample of this study also revealed average mental well-being among teachers. However, it is also significant to note that about one out of five teachers had poor mental well-being. Studies conducted in the Philippines during the pandemic also reported a moderate impact of COVID-19 on the quality of life of teachers (Oducado et al., 2021; Rabacal et al., 2020). Several other studies conducted elsewhere disclosed high levels of symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression, burnout among teachers and worsening mental health (Agyapong et al., 2022; Kotowski et al., 2022; Lau et al., 2022; Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021; Sigursteinsdottir & Rafnsdottir, 2022). Longitudinal research even noted that teachers' mental health and well-being have declined throughout the pandemic (Kim et al., 2021). Literature suggests that it can be attributed to the uncertainty of the pandemic, the sudden requirement to teach remotely, high workload, having to manage both in-person and online learning, undefined work hours, blurred personal and professional life, mul-

tiple roles, health concerns, among others (Kim et al., 2021; Kotowski et al., 2022; Rivera, 2022; Robinson et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic has presented numerous challenges for teachers, and this research highlights the importance of monitoring and giving attention to the welfare and well-being of teachers during worldwide health crises and pandemics.

In this study, three out of nine variables significantly predicted the teachers' subjective mental well-being. This research found that teachers residing in towns or rural areas had significantly higher mental well-being. Some studies have shown that a higher level of rurality is linked with better mental well-being (Alcañiz et al., 2020), and there is some empirical evidence suggesting that teachers in rural schools are likely to have higher subjective well-being and are more effective in improving students' development (Tang, 2018). Personal or family considerations are often the reasons why teachers accept positions in rural schools (Leech et al., 2022). There can be several reasons why teachers residing in rural areas may have better mental well-being. Compared to urban areas, rural areas typically have a slower pace of life, less traffic, and fewer crowds (Gross et al., 2017). These factors can reduce stress levels and create a more relaxed environment. Educators in rural settings might encounter lesser job-related stress, potentially benefitting their mental health. Moreover, they may also experience heightened feelings of belonging and support from their local community, which can significantly enhance their mental well-being.

The type of school also predicted teachers' mental well-being; teachers working in government schools had significantly higher mental well-being in this study. A significant difference was also found in the stress level according to the type of school in another study (Lau et al., 2022). Teachers from public schools were detected to have higher well-being than teachers from private schools in Pakistan (Hussain et al., 2022). While it is known that public school teachers in the Philippines are overworked (David et al., 2019), teachers in public schools get paid more than their private school counterparts (Tadle, 2022). Also, public school teachers often have more job security and are less likely to face sudden layoffs than private school teachers. A significant difference between permanent and temporary teachers was detected in previous research (Capone & Petrillo, 2020). This may contribute to higher satisfaction, a greater sense of security, and less financial burden among teachers in public schools, which may contribute to better mental well-being. Mental health issues and financial constraints were reported themes in a qualitative study conducted during the pandemic among private school teachers in the Philippines (Gumarang, 2021).

Finally, this study found that teachers' job satisfaction positively and significantly predicted their mental well-being. The more satisfied the teachers are, the better their mental well-being is. Similar findings were also reported in other countries such as Hong Kong (Lau et al., 2022), Italy (Capone & Petrillo, 2020), Iran (Aliakbari, 2015), Pakistan (Hussain et al., 2022), Japan (Kuwato & Hirano, 2020). Teachers' job satisfaction plays a vital role in their mental health. When teachers are satisfied with their work, they experience higher well-being, job engagement, and overall mental well-being. The positive or favorable aspect of mental well-being can generate pleasant feelings, leading to teachers' job satisfaction (Cao et al., 2022). Hence, certain strategic actions must be taken to improve teachers' job satisfaction and, eventually, mental health.

Limitations exist with this study. Its scope was confined to Filipino teachers, thereby restricting the applicability of findings solely to the context and cultural nuances within the Philippines. Future research can verify the conclusions reached in this study through a multi-country comparative analysis and expansion to different cultural contexts. As cross-sectional design limits causal inference, this study only examined the relationship of certain demographic variables and job satisfaction on mental health. Results are constrained to correlation only and cannot establish causal effects between variables. In addition, the result derived from this research is subject to self-report bias and is not meant to be a clinical diagnosis of mental health problems. Furthermore, this study focuses solely on global job satisfaction and mental well-being measures without delving into specific dimensions. We recommend prudence in interpreting

and applying our research findings. Nonetheless, this research adds to the expanding evidence regarding teachers' psychological well-being.

5. CONCLUSION

This study, examining Filipino teachers two years after the onset of nationwide COVID-19 lockdown, underscores the pivotal role of job satisfaction in influencing teachers' mental health. It elucidates the critical link between professional satisfaction and psychological well-being, stressing the necessity of a supportive work environment in educational settings amidst the pandemic's transformative impact. Key findings highlight the urgency of prioritizing teacher well-being as essential to a dynamic educational system. The study reveals the influence of demographics, such as school type, residential setting, and job satisfaction, as significant predictors of mental well-being. In light of ongoing global health challenges, improving working conditions and strategizing for teachers' well-being, especially for younger female teachers in private schools and rural areas, is paramount. A major insight of this research is the need for customized mental health interventions within educational policies. This includes implementing mental health training for administrators, fostering peer support networks, and ensuring access to professional mental health services. The study also advocates for comprehensive policy reforms at the governmental level, targeting not just economic factors but also the overall quality of the teaching environment, including reduced class sizes, increased educational funding, and continuous professional development. This study presents a timely perspective on post-pandemic Filipino teachers' job satisfaction and mental well-being. It calls for a concerted effort among educational leaders, policymakers, and mental health professionals to collaboratively foster environments conducive to teachers' professional and personal growth. Such collaboration is crucial for the resilience and future sustainability of the educational workforce, ultimately enriching the educational sector.

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