Psychological well-being of educators: Barriers, supports, and career development implications

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ABSTRACT

Educator well-being has emerged as a critical determinant of both professional effectiveness and long-term career sustainability. Despite growing interest, the relationship between psychological well-being and educators' career development remains fragmented in literature. This review synthesises empirical evidence from 13 peer-reviewed studies published between 2013 and 2024, identified through Scopus, Web of Science, and EBSCOhost, to examine how educators' psychological well-being influences career development, with a focus on key barriers, supports, and professional implications. The analysis shows that psychological well-being is positively associated with career engagement, job satisfaction, and resilience among teachers and school counsellors. Key personal factors, such as emotion regulation, self-compassion, and psychological flexibility, and organisational support such as collegial trust, administrative backing, and a collaborative work culture, were found to enhance well-being. Gender-based differences were also noted, with female educators often reporting higher well-being yet greater emotional sensitivity in high-stress contexts. Interventions combining individual-level strategies (e.g., mindfulness, acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT)) and systemic approaches (e.g., institutional support structures) were found to be most effective. This review underscores the need for multilevel interventions and cross-contextual research to inform inclusive and sustainable policies that enhance educator well-being across diverse educational settings.

Keywords: psychological well-being, burnout, school counsellors and educators, interventions, career outcomes

INTRODUCTION

The global rise in teacher resignation rates from 4.6% in 2015 to over 9% by 2022 signals a growing crisis in educator well-being within the education sector (The Educator, 2023; UNESCO, 2023). This alarming trend has been primarily attributed to excessive job demands, unsupportive working conditions, and the perceived lack of societal appreciation for the teaching profession (The Educator, 2023). Supporting this, a survey conducted by Prodigy Education involving over 1,300 teachers found that 95% of respondents experienced significant stress levels, with 68% reporting moderate to severe stress.

Teachers and school counsellors, although serving different professional roles, are both entangled in the complex web of occupational stress. Teachers are required to meet curricular demands while managing classroom dynamics, whereas school counsellors often bear the responsibility of addressing students' emotional issues and overall well-being. In this context, the psychological well-being of educators can no longer be viewed as purely individual concern—It reflects the broader health and functionality of the educational system.

In contemporary education systems, educators face heightened vulnerability to various stressors that can deteriorate their mental well-being. Empirical studies highlight that the

education profession is particularly exposed to intense pressure, including excessive workloads, high expectations from students and administrators, limited resources, and insufficient institutional support (Agyapong et al., 2022; Emeljanovas et al., 2023). Educators are expected not only to master academic content but also to respond to students' emotional and developmental needs, which often leads to role strain, increased stress levels, and a heightened risk of burnout (Sánchez-Pujalte et al., 2023).

Burnout is characterised by emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment that has emerged as a primary consequence of low psychological well-being among educators (Leehu & Ditza, 2017; Xie et al., 2022). The negative impacts of burnout extend beyond individual health concerns; they also impair professional effectiveness and hinder career development (Markelj et al., 2023; Salvagioni et al., 2022). Educators experiencing burnout often report low job satisfaction, higher turnover intentions, and reduced productivity, all of which ultimately compromise the quality of the educational experience provided to students (Jamaludin & You, 2019; Russell et al., 2020). These effects are particularly significant in educational settings, where the quality of educator-student interaction directly shapes student learning outcomes. Burned-out educators may struggle to engage meaningfully with students, which can adversely affect students' academic performance and social development (Cui, 2020; Cui, 2022).

Although educator well-being is widely acknowledged as a critical issue in the education sector, research exploring its connection to career development remains scarce (Sarkar et al., 2024). While numerous studies have examined the physical and emotional challenges educators face, relatively few have examined the comprehensive relationship between psychological well-being and key career outcomes, such as job satisfaction, retention, professional efficacy, and career advancement. Furthermore, the role of well-being in fostering supportive and productive work environments has been largely underexplored, despite its considerable potential to enhance educational quality and effectiveness.

A synthesis of nine prior systematic literature reviews (see summary in Appendix A) reveals that while educator well-being has been examined through various lenses, ranging from intervention efficacy (Beames et al., 2023; Cann et al., 2022) to workload factors (Wahab et al., 2024), none have successfully integrated career development outcomes for both teachers and school counsellors within a unified framework.

Several prior systematic literature reviews have attempted to synthesis the growing body of research on educator well-being. For example, Beames et al. (2023) and Zhou et al. (2024) provided comprehensive analyses of interventions and antecedent–consequence models. However, both were limited by their focus on teachers alone and insufficient attention to career-related outcomes. Other broad field-mapping efforts, such as Hascher & Waber (2021) and Sandilos et al. (2023), underscored conceptual fragmentation and the neglect of systemic or organisational supports. Alongside these, numerous niche reviews have explored specific dimensions: pandemic-related challenges (Aziku & Zhang, 2024; Katsarou et al., 2023), intervention-based approaches (Cann et al., 2022; Vo & Allen, 2022), workload factors (Wahab et al., 2024), or the role of emotional intelligence (Molero et al., 2019). While valuable, these reviews either fragment the concept of educator well-being or confine their scope to subpopulations, such as teachers in early childhood education or special education contexts (e.g., Berger et al., 2022). Notably, school counsellors remain largely absent from these syntheses, and few reviews explicitly map well-being to career development trajectories such as job satisfaction, retention, or professional advancement.

This gap in literature underscores the need for a more integrated understanding of well-being in the educational context that accounts for the vast array of factors influencing educators' mental health and career progression. Variables such as organisational climate, work-life balance, opportunities for professional development, and social support from colleagues and administrators have been shown to impact well-being; however, their long-term implications for educators' career outcomes remain underexplored. Furthermore, factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural background may compound educators' well-being experiences,

underscoring the need for more nuanced approaches to understanding how these intersecting factors influence career development in educational settings.

To address these limitations, the present review introduces a unified Barriers–Supports–Career Development framework. Accordingly, this review responds directly to prior limitations by consolidating theoretical frameworks, barriers, supports, and outcomes into a structured synthesis that encompasses both classroom teachers and school counsellors. This approach extends beyond fragmented reviews by linking well-being to a comprehensive set of career development outcomes.

Moreover, although various frameworks and models have been proposed to conceptualise well-being, there remains a need to consolidate these approaches within the education profession. The absence of a universally accepted theoretical framework presents challenges for educators and policymakers in identifying effective strategies to address well-being issues in schools. Additionally, many instruments used to assess well-being and burnout are not tailored to the specific realities of educational settings, resulting in a lack of valid and reliable tools to capture the unique dimensions of well-being among educators.

Thus, this review aims to examine how well-being relates to educators' career development within educational environments. It seeks to offer a comprehensive exploration of the factors that support or hinder educator well-being, as well as their impact on career-related outcomes. The following research questions guide the review:

RQ 1: What theoretical frameworks are used to define and understand well-being in the context of educators in educational settings?

RQ 2: What are the barriers to promoting well-being, including well-being challenges and burnout risks, among educators in educational environments?

RQ 3: What factors contribute to the development and maintenance of educator well-being?

RQ 4: What instruments are used to measure well-being, including its components and burnout, among educators in educational contexts?

RQ 5: How does well-being influence career development outcomes for educators in educational settings?

RQ 6: Are there gender-based differences in how well-being affects career development?

RQ 7: What interventions have been implemented to address barriers to well-being, promote well-being, and prevent burnout?

By addressing these questions, this review seeks to offer critical insights into how well-being shapes educators' professional lives, with valuable implications for future research, intervention strategies, and policy development. The findings of this review are expected to inform the design of targeted interventions to enhance educator well-being, mitigate burnout, and ultimately foster more supportive and effective educational environments. Unlike prior reviews that focused exclusively on teacher burnout or intervention efficacy, this study uniquely integrates career development outcomes into a unified analytical model of educator well-being. Ensuring the well-being of educators is not only a moral imperative but also a vital investment in the future of education, as educators are central to the success and development of future generations.

METHOD

This study adopted a scoping review methodology to map the breadth and depth of existing literature on educator well-being and its career implications. The protocol was informed by the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) guidance for scoping reviews and reported following the PRISMA extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) checklist (Peters et al., 2020; Pollock et al., 2024; Tricco et al., 2018). This methodological framework is appropriate for exploratory research questions aimed at identifying key concepts, theories, and evidence gaps in a field, which aligns with our seven broad research questions (RQ1-RQ7).

Analysis stage needs assessment was conducted through curriculum review and interviews with teachers and students to identify abstract cell biology concepts requiring visualization and to select appropriate metaphors and metonymies.

Search strategy

This scoping review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018). To identify relevant studies, a comprehensive search was performed across three major, internationally indexed, and reputable databases: Scopus, Web of Science, and EBSCOhost. These databases were selected due to their extensive coverage of literature in educational psychology, well-being, and educator career development.

The literature search was carried out between September 24 and 25, 2024, using a combination of keywords and Boolean operators to capture a broad range of relevant terms. The following search strategy was employed: ("psychological well-being" OR eudaimonia OR wellness OR well-being OR happiness) AND (educator OR teacher OR counselor OR counseling OR "mental health practitioner") AND ("career development" OR "job satisfaction" OR "career outcome" OR "success") NOT (student OR child OR adolescent OR parent).

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The scope of this review was defined to include peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2013 and 2024, written in English. The inclusion and exclusion criteria applied in this review are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Population	Educators: teachers, school counsellors, school-based mental health practitioners	Students, children, adolescents, parents, and the general population
Intervention	Psychological well-being, eudaimonia, wellness, happiness	Studies focusing solely on clinical mental health disorders
Comparison	Career outcomes: job satisfaction, career development, professional success	Studies with no career-related components
Outcomes	Improvements in well-being, work engagement, resilience, professional satisfaction	Outcomes unrelated to well-being or career
Study Design	Empirical studies: quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods	Reviews, meta-analyses, theoretical papers, opinion pieces
Publication Year	Published between 2013 and 2024	Published before 2013
Publication Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in Scopus, WoS, or EBSCOhost	Conference proceedings, book chapters, dissertations, and non-peer-reviewed publications
Language	English	Non-English publications

Study selection

The article selection process was managed using Rayyan® software and conducted in two main phases: 1) Title and abstract screening, and 2) Full-text review based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The initial database search yielded 535 articles: 287 from Scopus, 82 from Web of Science, and 166 from EBSCOhost. After removing 31 duplicates, 504 articles remained for title and abstract screening. Eligible studies were then assessed in full text.

Two independent reviewers screened 504 articles using Rayyan®. To assess the reliability of the screening process, Cohen's Kappa was calculated, yielding $\kappa = 0.69$, which indicates substantial agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). Any conflicts between reviewers were resolved through discussion until mutual agreement was reached. At the full-text screening stage, reasons for study exclusion were systematically documented. The complete selection procedure is depicted in the PRISMA-ScR flow diagram (Figure 1). In total, thirteen studies met all inclusion criteria and were retained for analysis and mapping. The number of included studies reflects the specific focus of our research questions and the evolving nature of research at the intersection of

educator well-being and career development, consistent with the exploratory aim of this scoping review.

Data charting and synthesis

For studies that met the eligibility criteria, data were charted using a standardised form designed to capture information relevant to the research questions. The form included the following elements: 1) Author(s) and year of publication; 2) Participant characteristics (sample size, profession, location); 3) Sample and research design; 4) Theoretical framework; 5) Barriers and enablers of well-being; 6) Measurement instruments; 7) Key findings on the relationship between well-being and career development; 8) Gender-related analysis; and, 9) Interventions targeting psychological well-being.

Since the goal of the review was to map conceptual and empirical patterns rather than grade the effectiveness of interventions, no formal quality appraisal tools were used. Frameworks for scoping reviews (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010) are compatible with this methodology. Instead, the internal evaluation focused on the validity of the measurement tools, sample size, and design clarity. Using a structured (see Appendix B), two reviewers independently extracted the data, and any differences were resolved through discussion. The entire data extraction matrix is included in a reproducibility appendix.
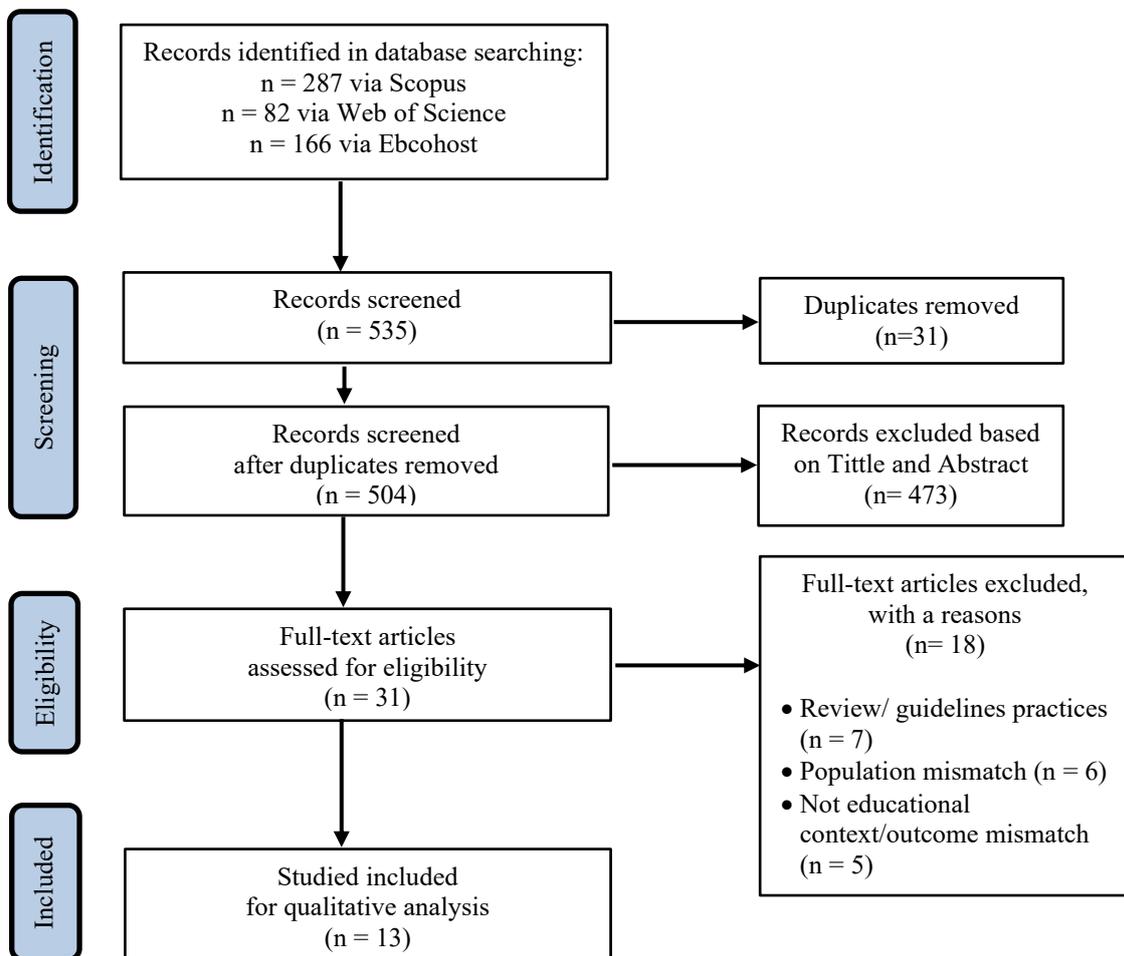

Figure 1. PRISMA-ScR Flow Diagram of Study Selection

Narrative synthesis

Given the diversity of study designs, analytical methods, and sample characteristics across the reviewed articles, a narrative and thematic synthesis approach was adopted to analyse and present the findings. This method is well-suited to the exploratory aims of a scoping review, as it facilitates the identification, organisation, and mapping of overarching themes and recurring

patterns in the literature. The synthesis was guided by our research questions and focused on mapping key concepts, including 1) the role of well-being in supporting or hindering career outcomes (e.g., work engagement, professional satisfaction, retention intentions), 2) personal and organisational factors shaping educator well-being, and 3) the range of interventions reported in the literature.

Data from the included studies were organised and summarised in a structured (See Appendix B) to provide a clear overview. The synthesis process involved iterative review and thematic grouping of the extracted data to develop a coherent conceptual map of the evidence (Figure 2). This approach aligns with established scoping review methodology, which emphasises a comprehensive descriptive account of the available literature rather than quantitative aggregation or critical appraisal of study quality. The results are presented thematically below, with each theme explicitly linked to the corresponding research questions (RQs) to ensure a clear and systematic mapping of the evidence.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings are organised into five overarching themes that collectively address the research questions. Theme 1 (Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks) primarily addresses RQ1 and informs the understanding of measurement approaches (RQ4). Theme 2 (Barriers to Psychological Well-Being) directly answers RQ2, while Theme 3 (Supports and Protective Factors) corresponds to RQ3. Theme 4 (Career and Organisational Implications) synthesises evidence related to RQ5 and explores gender differences (RQ6) where data are available. Finally, Theme 5 (Multilevel and Context-Sensitive Interventions) catalogues interventions relevant to RQ7. Table 3 (See Appendix B) provides a detailed overview of the included studies, while the narrative synthesis below it presents the conceptual mapping of evidence across these five themes.

Theme 1. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks of educator well-being

This theme maps the theoretical landscape used to define educator well-being (RQ1). Across the reviewed studies, educator psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct grounded primarily in eudaimonic perspectives on the Psychological Well-Being (PWB) model (İlğan et al., 2015; Purwaningrum et al., 2019b; Voon et al., 2022) appears most frequently, emphasising self-acceptance, purpose in life, and personal growth as core dimensions. Other frameworks, such as the PERMA Model (Ekşi et al., 2020), the Dualistic Model of Passion (Yukhymenko-Lescroart & Sharma, 2019), Five Factor Wellness (Myers et al., 2016) and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model (Doménech-Betoret et al., 2015), expand this conceptualisation to include both internal and contextual determinants of well-being. The literature thus presents a range of conceptual approaches, from individual-focused to systemic models. All these frameworks point to the dynamic interplay between individual psychological talents and contextual factors as the source of educators' psychological well-being. With this theoretical convergence, educational professionals are moving away from individual-centric perspectives and toward more systemic and interactionist conceptions of well-being. This mapping of theoretical frameworks (RQ1) also clarifies the diversity of measurement instruments employed in the field, as detailed in Appendix B, thereby directly informing RQ4.

Theme 2. Barriers to psychological well-being

This theme identifies and synthesises the key obstacles that undermine educator well-being, directly addressing RQ2. The synthesis reveals several recurring barriers that undermine educator well-being. Chief among these are administrative overload, excessive workload, limited institutional support, and role ambiguity, which collectively contribute to chronic stress and emotional fatigue (Ekşi et al., 2020; Kamboj & Garg, 2021; Kim & Jang, 2022; Myers et al., 2016). In low-resource contexts such as Indonesia and the Philippines, additional structural constraints, such as mental health stigma and inadequate access to psychological services, further intensify these challenges (Carandang et al., 2019; Purwaningrum et al., 2019b). Across cultural

contexts, these barriers manifest as both organisational and psychological stressors. The mapped evidence underscores the pervasive nature of these challenges and highlights that systemic and cultural factors significantly exacerbate burnout risk.

Theme 3. Supports and protective factors

This theme explores the psychological and contextual resources that buffer against stress and promote well-being among educators, addressing RQ3. The literature identifies several key enablers, with social support, resilience, spirituality, psychological flexibility, and self-compassion being most prominent (Carandang et al., 2019; Doménech-Betoret et al., 2015; Myers et al., 2016; Voon et al., 2022). These factors function as psychological resources that foster adaptation and emotional regulation amid professional challenges. Cultural context shapes the expression of these enablers. In collectivist societies such as Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia, spirituality and community connectedness are frequently reported as central to maintaining balance and purpose (Ekşi et al., 2020; Purwaningrum et al., 2019b). The synthesis indicates that these protective factors not only mitigate the adverse effects of barriers but can also reinforce educators' sense of meaning and professional identity.

Theme 4. Career and organisational implications

This theme examines the relationship between educational well-being and career development outcomes (RQ5) and explores gender-based differences where reported (RQ6). The mapped literature consistently associates higher psychological well-being with favourable career and organisational outcomes, including greater work engagement, career satisfaction, retention intentions, and professional efficacy (Ghasemi et al., 2023; İlğan et al., 2015; Kamboj & Garg, 2021; Yukhymenko-Lescroart & Sharma, 2019). Conversely, diminished well-being is associated with emotional exhaustion, career indecision, and tendencies toward attrition (Kim et al., 2022). The evidence suggests that educator well-being functions as a psychological mediator connecting personal adaptation and institutional sustainability. Therefore, fostering well-being is not merely an individual concern but a strategic imperative for maintaining the stability and quality of educational systems. Regarding gender differences (RQ6), several studies note that female educators report higher levels of self-compassion and resilience yet also experience greater emotional strain in high-pressure contexts (Cann et al., 2022; Voon et al., 2022). The synthesis suggests that well-being may function as a psychological link between personal adaptation and institutional sustainability. However, comparative gender analyses remain limited in the current literature, highlighting an area for future research.

Theme 5. Multilevel and context-sensitive interventions

This theme catalogues the range of interventions documented in the literature that aim to address educator well-being, directly addressing RQ7. The reviewed studies highlight a growing interest in multilevel interventions. Individual-level approaches such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), mindfulness training, and emotion regulation have been explored for enhancing self-acceptance and psychological flexibility (Ghasemi et al., 2023). Organisational strategies, including peer counselling, supervision groups, and school-based well-being programs, are documented as sources of collective support, particularly in low-resource contexts (Cann et al., 2022; Carandang et al., 2019). The synthesis points toward the potential value of integrated interventions that combine psychological skill-building with institutional reforms, reflecting a systems-informed perspective. A notable gap identified is the need for more context-sensitive intervention designs that explicitly consider gender, cultural values, and institutional capacity.

Through this synthesis, these five thematic domains establish a unified conceptual model: Educator psychological well-being is a dynamic, interactive system that is not a static personal attribute but rather a continuous negotiation between contextual barriers and protective resources. This conceptual framework is visually summarised in the conceptual synthesis map of educator well-being (see Figure 2). It reveals that while administrative demands, excessive workload, and structural stigma act as critical system stressors, supports like robust social networks, psychological flexibility, and culturally embedded spirituality function as vital system buffers.

Importantly, the resulting level of well-being serves as the central psychological mediator, linking these contextual factors to critical organisational and career outcomes, such as retention, professional efficacy, and burnout propensity. Therefore, the findings collectively argue that securing educator well-being requires a systemic, multilevel approach that integrates individual skill-building with context-sensitive institutional reforms, providing a robust foundation for future research and sustainable policy development across diverse educational settings.
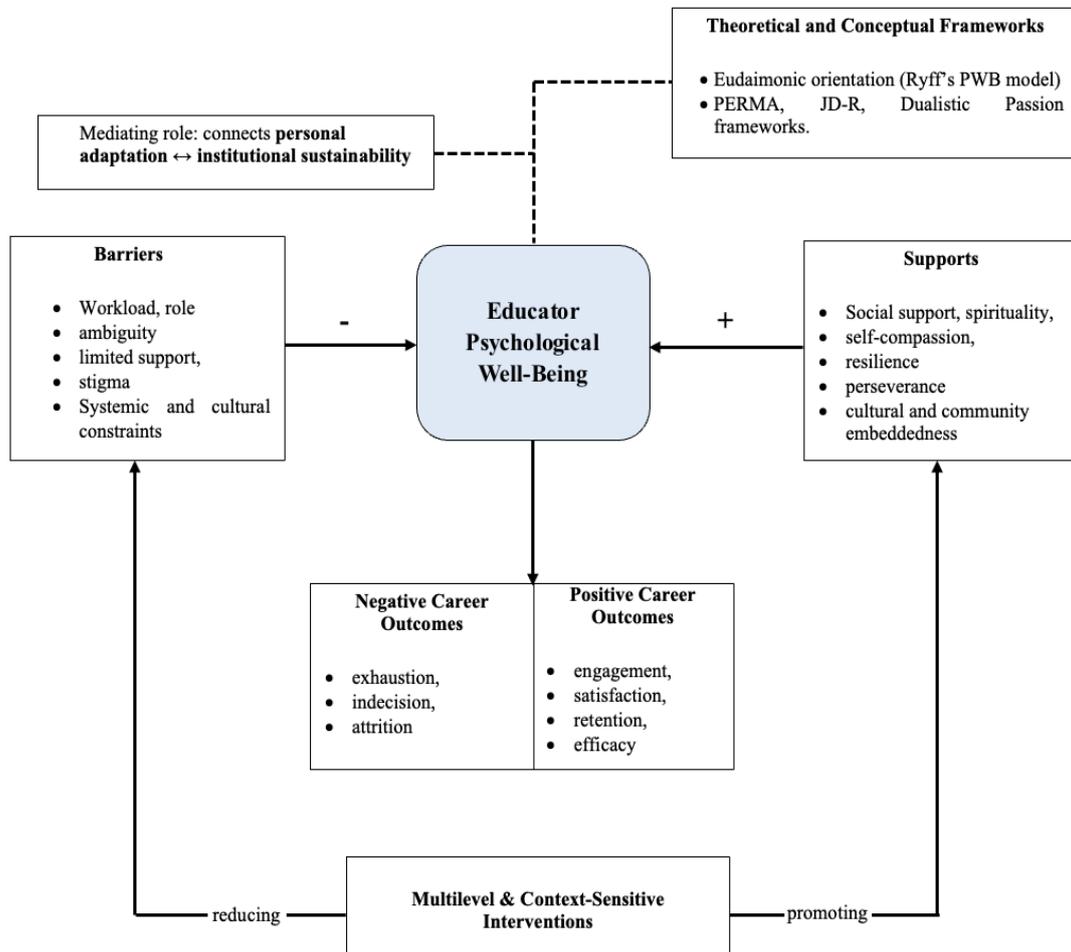

Figure 2. Conceptual Synthesis Map of Educator Well-Being: Integrating Barriers, Supports, and Career Outcomes

Discussion

This scoping review advances the field by critically examining the complex interplay of individual, organisational, and cultural factors that sustain psychological well-being among educators. The synthesis of the five thematic domains provides comprehensive answers to our seven research questions: mapping the scope and patterns of existing evidence on how educator well-being is conceptually defined, operationalised and measured; shaped by barriers and supports, associated with career development outcomes and gender-related differences, and addressed through reported intervention approaches. The well-being of educators is increasingly recognised as a critical driver of retention, performance, and student outcomes (Cann et al., 2022; Purwaningrum et al., 2019a). This review not only confirms these links but also reveals a persistent and central tension in literature: the attribution of responsibility for well-being. The debate between individual-focused and system-focused approaches is at the core of both theoretical and practical challenges in Ilnis domain, shaping the efficacy, ethics, and sustainability of interventions.

Substantial evidence supports the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker et al., 2005), which demonstrates how resource depletion leads to burnout. Among these resources, perceived social support from various sources is consistently highlighted as a critical buffer against stress. The use of the validated Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support is crucial for accurately assessing this support and designing effective institutional strategies (Khalid et al., 2023). However, reliance on the JD-R model alone is insufficient to explain the underlying psychological mechanisms. Integrating Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000) provides a deeper, more nuanced understanding, emphasising that resources are not merely instrumental but are essential for the fulfilment of innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. For example, administrative support (a JD-R resource) directly impacts autonomy, while collaborative cultures fulfil the need for relatedness. Conversely, a lack of constructive feedback undermines competence, and micromanagement diminishes autonomy. This synthesis clarifies that these resources are not only buffers against demands but also constitutive conditions for professional growth, sustained engagement, and career continuity within the profession.

Furthermore, the integrated JD-R/SDT framework positions cultural context as a constitutive layer that redefines the experience and interpretation of resources. The findings indicate that collectivistic cultures derive resilience from community (Ghasemi et al., 2023), and spirituality serves as a key resource in Indonesia and Turkey (Ekşi et al., 2020), challenging Western-centric interpretations of well-being. This is particularly evident in contexts where family is a primary source of support, underscoring the need for culturally sensitive approaches to strengthening support systems (Khalid et al., 2023). Taken together, these patterns suggest that universal theoretical models require contextual calibration to account for culturally specific pathways to psychological need satisfaction. Interventions that promote individual autonomy, which are commonly emphasised in Western contexts, may be less effective, or even counterproductive, in collectivistic settings where well-being is closely linked to relational harmony and communal obligations. In this regard, cultural competence is not just desirable but emerges as a necessary condition for effective well-being initiatives and interventions.

A critical finding of this review is the so-called resilience paradox. While psychological flexibility and self-compassion are consistently identified as protective factors (Ghasemi et al., 2023; Kamboj & Garg, 2021), an overemphasis on these individual traits creates an ethical and practical dilemma. This paradox is nuanced by evidence that the development of personal psychological competencies, such as self-actualisation, self-awareness, and assertiveness, remains an important, though insufficient, component of professional well-being (Oryngaliyeva et al., 2024). This can result in what Hobfoll et al. (2018) describe as a systemic 'attribution error,' where burnout is misattributed to a lack of resilience rather than to excessive demands and inadequate systemic support. Individual-level interventions, when not coupled with system-level reform, may inadvertently legitimise flawed systems by placing the burden of adaptation on employees. These risks framing struggling educators as having a 'resilience deficit,' pathologising what are often rational responses to adverse or unsupportive environments. Thus, promoting resilience is widely discussed as necessary but consistently portrayed as insufficient unless it is accompanied by meaningful systemic change.

The Systems Informed Positive Psychology (SIPP) perspective addresses this bias by reframing well-being as a collective property and a systemic outcome (Cann et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic sharply illuminated this reality: systemic failures, such as policy uncertainty and unsustainable workloads, can overwhelm even the most resilient individuals (Kim et al., 2022). This period demonstrated that personal mindfulness or self-care cannot compensate for a lack of structural support and responsive leadership, underscoring that well-being is a systemic condition to be cultivated, not merely an individual attribute to be developed in isolation.

The proposed multilevel ecosystem approach, as recurrently articulated across the reviewed studies, spans individual, team, and systemic levels and represents a dominant orientation within the literature toward sustainable well-being development. To move from theoretical description to meaningful action, it is necessary to specify the sequencing and primary focus of interventions, developing a coherent theory of change rather than offering a simple checklist of strategies. At

the individual level, interventions such as ACT, mindfulness, and self-compassion training should serve as support mechanisms. These align with broader goals of fostering psychological competence, including key attributes like self-awareness and assertive communication (Oryngaliyeva et al., 2024). In literature, these competencies are positioned not only as coping resources but also as enablers of professional agency, allowing educators to engage more deeply with their work and advocate for systemic change rather than merely endure unsustainable conditions. At the team level, strategies such as peer-reflection circles and collaborative professional learning communities are effective for building relatedness and collective efficacy, creating resource-rich micro-environments that buffer shared demands through solidarity and collective problem-solving. At the systemic level, leadership accountability for re-engineering work environments is consistently identified as a high-leverage factor for durable, sustainable change.

Based on this synthesis, specific implications emerge for policy, leadership, professional development, and research. For policymakers—especially in developing countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines, and Turkey, where several included studies originate—concrete steps include mandating protected administrative time, enforcing caps on non-instructional duties, and prioritising funding for mandatory clinical supervision to address secondary traumatic stress as a formal occupational hazard. School leaders should conduct annual "JD-R Resource Audits," implement paid peer-support programmes, and receive training in autonomy-supportive management. Professional development ought to integrate a "Psychologically Informed Practice" lens, empowering educators to discern systemic pressures and advocate collectively. Researchers are urged to pursue longitudinal, cost-effectiveness comparisons of systemic versus individual interventions, develop robust metrics for systemic factors, and clarify causal pathways between supportive environments and personal resilience.

Collectively, these implications underscore that supporting educator well-being requires a paradigm shift from over-relying on individual resilience toward intentionally designing systems that fulfil basic psychological needs. By integrating the JD-R and SDT frameworks, critically examining the resilience paradox, and prioritising actionable, multilevel reform, educational environments can be transformed into ecosystems where both educators and students thrive. The ramifications extend far beyond individual satisfaction, ultimately shaping the health, stability, and efficacy of entire educational systems.

CONCLUSION

This scoping review reaffirms that psychological well-being is a critical determinant in sustaining the quality and longevity of educators' careers. By synthesising the extant literature, we identify that while theoretical frameworks vary, well-being is consistently a multidimensional construct shaped by the interplay of personal resources and organisational dynamics. Our findings clarify the "dual pathway" of well-being. While robust well-being drives work engagement and career satisfaction, persistent barriers such as excessive administrative burdens and systemic neglect accelerate burnout, particularly in under-resourced regions.

The studies reviewed highlight that educator well-being is shaped by a combination of personal and organisational factors and a collaborative and supportive school culture. When educators experience a balance between job demands and available resources, they tend to perform better and exhibit greater resilience to work-related pressures. Nevertheless, several structural challenges persist, particularly in developing countries. Excessive administrative burdens, limited access to psychological support services, and unrealistic social expectations of educators' roles require critical attention in policy and intervention design. While individual-level interventions such as mindfulness and ACT show positive outcomes, greater efficacy is found in organisational-level strategies that address systemic support and cultural reform.

Accordingly, comprehensive educator well-being policies should adopt multi-level approaches that holistically integrate individual, relational, and structural dimensions. This review also addresses an important gap in the existing literature by evidence across diverse socio-cultural contexts and emphasizing the need for context-sensitive, system-based strategies,

particularly in under-represented regions. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs, mixed-methods approach, and cross-cultural comparisons to provide a more nuanced understanding of educator well-being. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs, mixed methods approach, and cross-cultural comparisons to provide a more nuanced understanding of educator well-being. However, this review was constrained by the inherent heterogeneity in the primary studies' designs and measurement scales, which limited the scope for quantitative meta-analysis. Future systematic reviews should therefore aim for more targeted syntheses, focusing on narrowly defined contexts or utilising advanced meta-analytic techniques to further enhance methodological rigour. These directions are vital for informing inclusive, evidence-based, and sustainable policies and practices that place educator well-being at the core of quality education systems.

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Appendix A. Prior literature reviews on educator well-being

Author(s)	Primary Focus	Population	Key Limitations
Hascher & Waber (2021)	Field mapping (2000–2019)	Teachers	No structured framework; inconsistent measures; no career development linkage.
Zhou (2024)	JD-R antecedents/consequences	Teachers (incl. pre-service)	Limited career development scope; no counsellor focus.
Sandilos (2023)	Bioecological framing and interventions	U.S. teachers	Skills bias; limited organisational/contextual depth.
Beames (2023)	Intervention efficacy	K–12 Teachers	Individual-level focus; limited organisational lens.
Dreer (2023)	Teacher well-being outcomes	Teachers	Few causal designs; No explicit career development framing.
Cann (2022)	Intervention synthesis	Teachers	Focuses only on *what works* (interventions), with no linkage to career development.
Wahab (2024)	Workload-focused review	Teachers	Narrow focus (only 1 barrier); no career development link.
Molero (2019)	Emotional intelligence & burnout	Teachers	Construct-specific (hanya EI); no career development focus.
Katsarou (2023)	COVID-19 teacher well-being	Teachers	Time-bound/event-specific; limited long-term career relevance.

Appendix B. Characteristics of included studies in the scoping review of educator well-being

Authors (Year)	Country	Sample & Design	Theoretical Framework	Barriers to Well-Being / Burnout Risk	Enablers of Well-Being	Measurement Instruments	Career Development Outcomes	Gender Differences	Interventions
(Ekşi et al., 2020)	Turkey	N = 378 teachers; Quantitative (correlational)	PERMA Model; Spiritual Well-Being	Psychological stress, anomie, work-life imbalance	Spirituality, transcendence, harmony with nature	PERMA Scale, Spiritual Well-Being Scale, Perceived Stress Scale	Anomie negatively impacts job satisfaction; transcendence improves happiness	Not analysed	Spiritual counselling, life-meaning coping, work-life balance strategies
(Carandang et al., 2019)	Philippines	N = 60 peer counsellors; Mixed methods (pre-post design)	Stepped Care Model; Task Shifting	Limited access to mental health care, stigma, and resource scarcity	Social support, community engagement, and counselling competence	GDS-15, WHO-5 Well-Being Index	Increased confidence and reduced depressive symptoms	Majority female (95%), no comparative analysis	Community-based peer counselling, group supervision
(Lee & Lai, 2020)	Malaysia	N = 150 female teachers; Quantitative (cross-sectional)	Mental Health and Happiness Index Model	High workload, cultural pressure on women	Administrative support, school well-being programs	DASS-21, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire	Higher mental health linked to better job performance	Gender-specific sample, no comparative analysis	Routine well-being monitoring, counselling programs
(Yukhymenko-Lescroart & Sharma, 2019)	USA	N = 177 faculty; Quantitative (SEM)	Dualistic Model of Passion	Obsessive passion, lack of work-life balance	Harmonious passion, sense of purpose	Passion Scale, Sense of Purpose Scale, SWLS	Increased satisfaction and happiness through harmonious passion	Not analysed	Passion regulation and self-awareness training
(Ghasemi et al., 2023)	Iran	N = 40 teachers (RCT); Quantitative	Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)	Work stress, administrative pressure, and emotional fatigue	Psychological flexibility, self-acceptance	Ryff's PWB Scale	Moderate improvement in psychological well-being ($\eta2 = .60$)	No significant differences	Online self-guided ACT-based intervention

Authors (Year)	Country	Sample & Design	Theoretical Framework	Barriers to Well-Being / Burnout Risk	Enablers of Well-Being	Measurement Instruments	Career Development Outcomes	Gender Differences	Interventions
(Purwaningrum et al., 2019b)	Indonesia	N = 5 school counselors; Qualitative (phenomenology)	Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Model	Administrative demands, work overload, and imbalance	Social support, religiosity, self-concept, mindfulness	Ryff's PWB Scale (42 items)	Well-being fosters personal-professional role balance	Not analysed	Self-awareness training, emotion regulation, and social support
(Kamboj & Garg, 2021)	India	N = 200 teachers; Quantitative (cross-sectional)	Broaden-and-Build Theory	Workload, administrative burden	Emotional intelligence, perseverance, and self-reliance	SSEIT, Ryff's PWB Scale	Associated with higher work engagement	Females had higher EI and resilience	Emotion regulation training, resilience programs
(İlğan et al., 2015)	Turkey	N = 784 teachers; Quantitative	Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Model	High workload, poor admin support	Quality work relationships, administrative support	PWB Scale, QSWL Scale	Higher PWB correlated with job satisfaction and commitment	Females reported higher well-being	School climate improvements, relational support
(Myers et al., 2016)	USA	N=11 counselor educators; qualitative (phenomenological interviews)	Five Factor Wellness	Lack of time, incongruence between identity and role, work-related stress & pressures	Support from department chairs, family/partners, mentoring, time management, work-life balance	Five Factor Wellness Inventory (5F-Wel), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS.	influences career sustainability, productivity, and relationships; supported by mentoring & social support	Not specifically addressed.	Promoting time management, work-life balance, mentoring programs, practicing wellness models
(Cann et al., 2022)	New Zealand	N = 559 educators; Quantitative (survey)	Systems Informed Positive Psychology (SIPP)	Lack of trust, poor collaboration, weak organisational support	Interpersonal trust, school collaboration	Flourishing Scale, SWLS	Improved satisfaction and collaboration in school settings	Females scored higher on well-being aspects	Trust-building and collaborative culture initiatives

Authors (Year)	Country	Sample & Design	Theoretical Framework	Barriers to Well-Being / Burnout Risk	Enablers of Well-Being	Measurement Instruments	Career Development Outcomes	Gender Differences	Interventions
(Voon et al., 2022)	Malaysia	N = 408 counsellors; Quantitative (PRyff's)	Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Model	Emotional burden, trauma exposure, and lack of self-care	Self-compassion, resilience	SCS, SPWB, CD-RISC-10	Improved professional identity and well-being	Females had higher self-compassion and resilience	Self-compassion and resilience training
(Doménech-Betoret et al., 2015)	Spain	N = 282 teachers; Quantitative (SEM)	Job Demands-Resources Model	High demands, unmet psychological needs	Social support, need satisfaction	UWES, MBI-Ed, TPNS	Higher well-being reduces burnout	No significant gender difference	School-level well-being policies and social support
(Kim et al., 2022)	UK	N = 24 teachers; Qualitative (longitudinal)	Job Demands-Resources Model	Uncertainty, high workload, and emotional strain during COVID-19	Social support, joand b autonomy, coping strategies	Thematic analysis (no quantitative instrument)	Emotional exhaustion led to potential are attrition	Women more affected emotionally	Flexible work policies, better communication with educators