



Teachers' Mental Health and the Psychological Assessment of Teaching Profession Candidates: A Literature Review

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Abstract

This article examines the importance of considering teachers' mental health in the selection and recruitment of teaching profession candidates. Given the central role of teachers in educational quality, psychological readiness represents an important factor that remains insufficiently considered in many recruitment systems.

Using a narrative literature review approach, the article synthesizes theoretical and empirical literature on mental health, psychological well-being, assessment practices, and teacher effectiveness. The review highlights that mental health extends beyond the absence of psychological disorders to include well-being, resilience, positive emotional functioning, and effective social adaptation.

The findings indicate that integrating mental health considerations into teacher selection may enhance teacher effectiveness, classroom climate, resilience, and educational outcomes. The review also emphasizes the need to apply psychological assessment within a comprehensive and ethically responsible evaluation framework that combines multiple sources of evidence.

The article concludes that mental health should be recognized as an important component of teacher selection and professional development policies aimed at improving educational quality and supporting teacher well-being.

Keywords: Teacher Selection; Mental Health; Teacher Well-Being; Psychological Assessment; Educational Quality

Résumé

Cet article examine l'importance de prendre en compte la santé mentale des enseignants lors de la sélection et du recrutement des candidats à la profession enseignante. Compte tenu du rôle central des enseignants dans la qualité de l'éducation, l'aptitude psychologique constitue un facteur important qui reste insuffisamment pris en compte dans de nombreux systèmes de recrutement.

À l'aide d'une approche narrative de la revue de la littérature, l'article synthétise la littérature théorique et empirique sur la santé mentale, le bien-être psychologique, les pratiques d'évaluation et l'efficacité des enseignants. Cette revue souligne que la santé mentale va au-delà de l'absence de troubles psychologiques pour inclure le bien-être, la résilience, le fonctionnement émotionnel positif et une adaptation sociale efficace.

Les résultats indiquent que l'intégration de considérations relatives à la santé mentale dans la sélection des enseignants peut améliorer l'efficacité de ces derniers, le climat en classe, la résilience et les résultats scolaires. La revue souligne également la nécessité d'appliquer l'évaluation psychologique dans un cadre d'évaluation complet et éthiquement responsable qui combine de multiples sources de données.

L'article conclut que la santé mentale devrait être reconnue comme une composante importante des politiques de sélection des enseignants et de développement professionnel visant à améliorer la qualité de l'éducation et à soutenir le bien-être des enseignants.

Mots-clés : Sélection des enseignants ; Santé mentale ; Bien-être des enseignants ; Évaluation psychologique ; Qualité de l'éducation



Introduction:

The teaching profession is one of the oldest and most influential professions in human history, contributing to the shaping of both the individual and society. It transcends the mere transmission of knowledge, encompassing the building of awareness, the development of values, and the guidance of the intellectual and behavioral paths of generations. Education cannot be viewed simply as a job; rather, it is a civilizational mission in which cognitive, ethical, and social dimensions intertwine. The teacher's role is not limited to being a conduit of knowledge; they also undertake an educational function that contributes to the reproduction of culture while simultaneously critiquing and developing it.

Furthermore, the teaching profession forms the cornerstone of any educational system. It is the direct agent in translating policies and curricula into practical applications within the school environment. The effectiveness of educational reforms remains contingent upon the teacher's competence and their ability to adapt to rapid social and technological transformations. On a personal level, the teaching profession represents a deep ethical commitment and a great intellectual responsibility, which requires teachers to maintain a constant awareness of their professional responsibilities and to continuously engage in developing their scientific and educational skills, and to achieve a balance between educational authority and the human dimension, and between the requirements of evaluation and the pressures of performance on the one hand, and supporting the comprehensive development of learners on the other hand.

Consequently, education systems worldwide have sought to establish standards for selecting qualified individuals for the teaching profession. This is in response to developments in the education sector globally, particularly the increasing emphasis on quality assurance and selecting the most competent individuals. As a result, candidates for this profession in many countries undergo a series of tests and diverse assessment procedures designed to measure their professional readiness, academic and pedagogical competence, and psychological well-being. Psychological well-being has become a key criterion in the selection process, given its direct link to the quality and demands of teaching. This psychological well-being is not limited to the absence of psychological disorders in the candidate, but extends to a degree of overall psychological well-being, indicating the individual's ability to adapt positively to work and life pressures, utilize their resources efficiently, and thus perform effectively and contribute positively to the school and social environment.

1. Problem Statement

The mental health of teachers has become a fundamental element in ensuring the quality of the educational process and maintaining a stable school environment. Studies indicate that poor mental health negatively impacts a teacher's performance, relationships with students, classroom management skills, ability to cope with work-related stress, and the effectiveness and quality of the teaching and learning process in all its aspects. This is due to the pivotal role teachers play in creating supportive conditions for student achievement. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) point out that teachers suffering from poor mental health or emotional



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instability create tense classroom environments, which negatively affect student motivation and psychological well-being.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, a lack of psychological balance or the presence of psychological disorders leads individuals to resort to defense mechanisms that hinder their interaction with others. For teachers, this manifests in unhealthy classroom interactions, such as projecting internal conflicts onto students—e.g., feelings of frustration, aggression, or insecurity. Consequently, students may be perceived as a threat, prompting the teacher to respond aggressively or to provoke feelings of guilt or rejection without understanding the underlying reasons. Public shaming and ridicule are among the strategies some teachers use to assert their authority. These strategies fall under the category of publicly humiliating teaching methods, which include public reprimands, mockery, and emotional manipulation. Teachers who employ these strategies often exhibit narcissistic traits (such as a need for admiration) or authoritarian tendencies, using shaming and arrogance to control classroom dynamics. They seek attention, are highly sensitive to criticism, and may sometimes ridicule students to reinforce their sense of superiority, while interpreting academic challenges as personal threats.

Numerous studies have highlighted the close relationship between teachers' mental health and their professional performance. For example, when teachers are under stress, they may be unable to provide their students with the necessary support for academic success (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009) Conversely, fairness and respect in teacher-student interactions play a crucial role in fostering a positive

classroom climate and minimizing disruptive behaviors. In contrast, perceptions of unfair treatment may evoke negative emotional responses such as anger, frustration, and anxiety. When students perceive that they are treated fairly, they are more likely to view authority figures as legitimate and trustworthy, which in turn strengthens their self-esteem and enhances their sense of belonging within the school environment (Tyler & Blader, 2003).

In a related perspective, Robert and Pianta (1999) emphasized that the teacher–student relationship constitutes a meaningful emotional bond that is fundamental to students' overall development. This relationship significantly influences academic outcomes—such as achievement, persistence, and performance—as well as mental health indicators, including reductions in anxiety, depression, and behavioral difficulties. Within school contexts, anxiety and psychological distress are among the most prevalent emotional challenges, and they function as substantial barriers to effective learning. These negative emotional states not only impair students' cognitive functioning and skill development but also contribute to the formation of unfavorable attitudes toward studying and diminish their engagement and enjoyment in the learning process.

These behaviors among teachers represent a significant obstacle to achieving educational goals, particularly in the early educational stages (primary, intermediate, and secondary), where teachers exert a considerable influence on students' personalities and awareness due to their high psychological sensitivity. Therefore, preventative measures are essential to mitigate and manage these situations. It is clear that teachers suffering from mental health problems not only impede learning but may, in some cases, pose a threat to



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students' mental health, especially in the early educational stages. This necessitates addressing this issue and reducing its negative impact on students by adopting psychological assessment mechanisms when selecting candidates for the teaching profession. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2015) affirms that professional psychological assessments reduce failure rates and maladjustment, particularly in sensitive professions. Recent research in educational psychology emphasizes that teacher selection processes should extend beyond traditional academic and cognitive criteria to incorporate psychological and socio-emotional characteristics. In this regard, meta-analytic evidence suggests that attributes such as emotional stability, self-efficacy, motivation, and interpersonal competence play a crucial role in determining teachers' effectiveness and well-being (Klassen & Kim, 2019). Integrating these psychological dimensions into recruitment procedures allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of candidates, ensuring that selected teachers possess not only the knowledge and skills required for instruction but also the personal resources necessary to cope with occupational stress and build positive relationships with students. From this perspective, the inclusion of psychological criteria in teacher selection can be considered a preventive strategy that contributes to enhancing teachers' mental health, reducing burnout, and fostering more supportive and effective learning environments.

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2. Research Objectives

This article aims to:

- -Examine the concept of mental health and its relevance to the teaching profession.
- Identify the major indicators of positive mental health among teachers.
- Review the principal approaches and instruments used in mental health assessment.
- Analyze the role of mental health assessment in the selection and recruitment of teaching profession candidates.
- Explore evidence-based strategies for promoting teachers' mental health and professional well-being.
- Critically examine the potential benefits, ethical considerations, and practical challenges associated



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with the use of psychological assessment in teacher selection, and its implications for educational quality

3. Research Questions

This article seeks to address the following research questions:

- How is mental health conceptualized within contemporary psychological and educational literature?
- What are the principal indicators of positive mental health that contribute to effective teaching and professional well-being?
- What approaches and psychometric instruments are commonly used to assess mental health in educational and professional contexts?
- Why should mental health assessment be considered as a criterion in the selection and recruitment of teaching profession candidates?
- What evidence-based strategies can be implemented to promote and sustain teachers' mental health and resilience?
- What ethical, legal, and practical challenges should be considered when incorporating psychological assessment into teacher selection procedures?

4. Methodology of Literature Review

This article adopts a narrative literature review approach to examine the role of mental health in the teaching profession and its relevance to the psychological assessment of teaching profession candidates. The review aims to synthesize theoretical perspectives and empirical findings related to

teachers' mental health, psychological well-being, assessment practices, and professional effectiveness.

Relevant literature was identified through searches of major academic sources and databases, including Google Scholar, ERIC, PsycINFO, Scopus, and Web of Science. The search process employed a combination of keywords such as "teachers' mental health," "teacher well-being," "psychological assessment," "teacher selection," "teacher recruitment," "psychological resilience," "teacher burnout," and "positive mental health."

The selection process focused on peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, international reports, meta-analyses, and theoretical studies addressing mental health within educational and occupational contexts. Priority was given to publications that examined teachers' mental health, assessment approaches, indicators of psychological well-being, and evidence-based intervention strategies.

Both classical and contemporary sources were included in order to provide a comprehensive conceptual and theoretical understanding of the topic. The collected literature was analyzed thematically and organized into major categories, including the conceptualization of mental health, indicators of positive mental health, mental health assessment approaches, the role of psychological assessment in teacher selection, and strategies for supporting teachers' mental well-being.



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Table 1***Literature Review Strategy***

Component	Description
Review Design	Narrative Literature Review
Databases Consulted	Google Scholar, ERIC, PsycINFO, Scopus, and Web of Science
Main Keywords	Teachers' Mental Health; Teacher Well-being; Psychological Assessment; Teacher Selection; Teacher Recruitment; Psychological Resilience; Teacher Burnout
Types of Sources	Peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, meta-analyses, and international reports
Inclusion Criteria	Sources addressing teachers' mental health, psychological well-being, psychological assessment, teacher selection, teacher resilience, and mental health interventions in educational contexts
Exclusion Criteria	Sources unrelated to education, teacher well-being, psychological assessment, or non-scholarly publications
Analysis Strategy	Thematic analysis and synthesis of theoretical and empirical literature

5. Mental Health:

The concept of mental health has undergone significant development since the emergence of the mental health movement, whose roots can be traced back to the work of Clifford Beers in the United States. In 1908, Beers published **A Mind That Found Itself**, a book based on his personal experiences as a patient in three psychiatric hospitals. The book had a profound global impact. That same year, the Connecticut Mental Health Association was founded, and the term "mental health" was proposed and quickly gained widespread use, particularly with the establishment of the National Commission on Mental Health in 1909.

5.1 Defining Mental Health

Since its inception, the concept of mental health has been defined in various ways, reflecting the perspectives of diverse schools of psychology. For decades, the most common definition focused on the absence of mental and personality disorders. Over time, this definition has evolved, influenced by positive psychology, to include additional dimensions of mental health. This evolution is reflected in the current definition proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO), which states that mental health is a dynamic state of well-being in which individuals are able to manage their daily lives, develop their abilities, function effectively in their occupations, and contribute positively to their communities (WHO, 2022). This perspective highlights that mental health goes beyond the mere absence of disorders to encompass functional and social capabilities.

Furthermore, mental health is considered an integral part of overall health and well-being, supporting individuals' and communities' capacities to make decisions, build



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relationships, and shape the world they live in (WHO, 2022). This emphasizes two key aspects: positive emotions and effective functioning. Similarly, Keyes' multidimensional model of mental health includes three interrelated domains: emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being; these dimensions together reflect not only how individuals feel, but also how they perform their personal and social functions within their environments (Keyes, 2005).

5.2 Indicators of Positive Mental Health

Positive mental health represents a multidimensional state of well-being that goes beyond the mere absence of mental disorders. It is characterized by the realization of human potential in the emotional, psychological, and social domains. Its main indicators include:

5.2.1. *Absence of Mental Disorders:*

The absence of mental disorders, such as generalized anxiety, depression, or mood disorders, is a key indicator of positive mental health. This state reflects an individual's ability to maintain emotional balance and control their emotional responses to stressful situations. It also allows for an appropriate level of mental clarity and mood stability, which supports sound cognitive and functional performance in various areas of life. Furthermore, the absence of these disorders promotes psychological security and inner peace, positively impacting social relationships and the ability to adapt to environmental demands.

In the professional sphere, the absence of anxiety is a fundamental requirement for the ability to work in general, and in education in particular, directly and positively

impacting their professional performance both inside and outside the classroom. This is characterized by emotional balance, positive interaction with students, making appropriate educational decisions, handling work pressures efficiently and flexibly, enhancing their professional motivation, adhering to professional ethics, and improving the quality of their professional relationships with colleagues and management. All these factors contribute positively to the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and its outcomes.

5.2.2. *The ability to regulate emotions:*

The ability to regulate emotions enables individuals to respond effectively to stress and maintain a positive state of mind (Fredrickson, 2001). This element reflects the capacity to regulate emotions and psychological resilience in the face of both positive and negative stressors. It involves awareness of one's feelings, attention to their emotional manifestations, and effective management of these feelings. This helps individuals maintain their psychological balance under continuous stimulation or pressure. Positive stressors, such as professional challenges or high expectations, can be sources of growth and motivation when individuals possess sufficient emotional regulation skills. This contributes to the development of effective coping strategies, protects against emotional burnout, and promotes overall mental health. The ability to cope with stress, a fundamental element of mental health, includes managing emotional responses in both positive and negative situations. Therefore, psychological resilience is not limited to resisting negative stressors but also includes maintaining constructive performance under continuous positive demands.



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In the field of education, teachers' ability to regulate their emotions enhances their professional competence and enables them to respond effectively and positively to educational pressures. Emotional regulation allows teachers to manage negative emotions, such as anger and frustration, and transform them into calm and thoughtful pedagogical responses. For example, it allows them to deal with challenging student behaviors without tension or escalation, and to choose supportive teaching strategies instead of punitive measures. It also enables them to handle heavy workloads or frequent assessments with psychological resilience, maintain emotional stability, and prevent burnout and exhaustion. Furthermore, this behavior serves as a positive personal model for students by providing a practical example of self-regulation and fostering a safe and stimulating classroom environment conducive to learning.

5.2.3. Psychological Resilience

Psychological resilience is a key characteristic for assessing an individual's ability to cope positively with stress and traumatic events. It reflects the capacity to maintain an acceptable level of psychological and social functioning despite exposure to risks or stressful circumstances. Psychological resilience is increasingly considered a normal adaptive process rather than an exceptional trait, arising from the daily interaction between individuals and their social and environmental resources (Master, 2001).

Recent studies indicate that resilience is not a rare trait or "superpower," but rather a set of natural adaptive processes, enhanced by an individual's skills, social relationships, and

contextual resources, enabling them to adapt positively to challenges.

In this context, Masten (2001) emphasizes that psychological resilience is not an exceptional trait or a rare ability, but rather the product of normal human adaptation processes, supported by effective psychological and social systems that promote healthy development. This approach complements the interactionist model of stress presented by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman (1984), where the experience of stress is closely linked to how individuals cognitively evaluate situations and the coping strategies they adopt. This perspective highlights that stress responses are not only determined by objective conditions but are also shaped by perception, thus underscoring the pivotal role of cognitive evaluation processes in determining the intensity and nature of psychological responses. Therefore, understanding mental health—particularly in professional contexts requires viewing psychological resilience as a dynamic process arising from the interaction of individual, cognitive, and social factors.

In a professional context, psychological resilience enables functional adaptation to adversity through cognitive flexibility and coping resources. It allows individuals to adapt to stress while maintaining or quickly recovering their psychological stability when faced with significant life challenges. This ability relies heavily on cognitive flexibility, a mental skill that enables individuals to shift their perspectives, reframe negative situations, and modify their thinking or behavior as circumstances evolve. For example if someone loses their job and interprets the situation as an opportunity for professional growth rather than a personal failure, they are demonstrating cognitive flexibility. Similarly



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coping resources—such as emotional regulation, social support, and problem-solving skills—enable effective stress management.

In the teaching profession, psychological resilience enables teachers to cope with professional stress by seeking support from colleagues or mentors, using relaxation techniques, and adjusting their strategies instead of succumbing to anxiety. Teachers with high psychological resilience can adapt both functionally and emotionally to the classroom environment and educational challenges without losing their psychological equilibrium or compromising the quality of their interactions with students. Teachers face a variety of professional stressors; for example, when a student exhibits resistance or disruptive behavior, a resilient teacher interprets this behavior as a reflection of the student's anxiety or frustration, rather than a personal challenge to the teacher. This interpretation encourages the use of positive communication strategies (such as one-on-one dialogue and supportive feedback) instead of punitive or negative emotional responses.

Teachers also demonstrate resilience when they accept the failure of a teaching activity (such as an unsuccessful lesson or exercise) and redesign it to meet students' needs, rather than becoming frustrated or rigid. During periods of professional stress, teachers may draw upon the coping resources mentioned earlier, which enable them to transform stressful situations into opportunities for learning and professional growth.

Therefore, resilience in teachers is not merely a personal trait, but a valuable educational asset that directly improves

the quality of classroom interactions and the overall academic climate.

This dimension refers to an individual's development and expression of their personal capabilities through goal-oriented behavior. This involves translating what truly matters to the individual into self-selected goals that they strive to achieve through flexible plans, skill acquisition, and seeking environments that support their autonomy. This is reflected in meaningful goal-directed behaviors that align with personal values (Ryff, 2014).

5.2.4. Purposeful Self-Actualization

Purposeful self-actualization is based on positive well-being, which focuses on meaning, purpose, and personal growth. Motivational evidence suggests that self-aligned goals—chosen based on internal values rather than external pressures—predict better perseverance, performance, and mental health compared to imposed goals. In this context, the World Mental Health Report (2022) highlights the importance of creating professional environments that foster autonomy, participation, learning opportunities, and social support, enabling individuals to pursue meaningful goals. Recent research links having life goals to lower levels of depression and anxiety, and enhanced resilience across different age groups, underscoring the protective role of pursuing self-aligned goals for mental health and daily functioning (WHO, 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2022; Barcaccia et al., 2023).

For teachers, self-actualization based on meaningful goals contributes to the quality of their teaching performance. It motivates them to consciously and strategically invest their personal and professional capabilities to achieve valuable educational objectives. Teachers who are aware of their



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personal values and translate what is important to them into voluntary educational goals often demonstrate higher levels of commitment and motivation in their classroom practices. This is reflected in flexible lesson planning, ongoing professional development, and the pursuit of innovative teaching strategies that align with their pedagogical convictions. Alignment between personal values and professional goals enhances teachers' sense of competence and job satisfaction, positively impacting the quality of education.

5.2.5. Positive Social Functioning

Positive social functioning is a key indicator of mental health, reflecting an individual's ability to interact effectively and harmoniously with others, build supportive relationships, resolve conflicts peacefully, and participate constructively in group activities. This understanding aligns with the World Health Organization's definition of mental health as a state of well-being that enables individuals to cope with the stresses of life, work, learn, and contribute to society (WHO, 2022).

In the field of education, a teacher with strong positive social functioning demonstrates warm and supportive relationships with students, communicating positively and responding appropriately to their feelings, thus fostering a safe and engaging classroom environment (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Hamre, & Pianta., 2001).

A teacher's social competence is linked to their ability to manage the classroom effectively, provide constructive encouragement and positive feedback, and minimize reliance on emotional punishment. This positively impacts student

behavior and enhances their participation in academic activities (Patz & Werzberger, 2024; Hattie, 2009).

Conversely, a lack of or weakness in positive social functioning may lead teachers to adopt rigid or strained communication styles, misunderstand student behavior, act impulsively, and resort to punitive measures. This is associated with increased occupational stress, a higher risk of burnout, a less supportive classroom environment, more behavioral problems, and decreased student motivation.

6. Mental Health Measures:

Mental health measures constitute a system of standardized instruments designed to describe mental state in a way that goes beyond the mere absence of illness to encompass well-being, functioning, and coping ability. Several approaches have been developed in constructing mental health measures, including the following.

6.1. Psychological Distress Scales

Mental health scales based on the psychological distress perspective aim to assess negative psychological states dimensionally (along a continuum of intensity) rather than categorically (diagnostively). That is, they assess the degree of nonspecific distress or strain through emotional, cognitive, and physical indicators over a short period of time (usually two to four weeks) to generate an overall score that reflects the general psychological burden among individuals or groups (Kessler et al., 2002; Goldberg, 1992). These scales are used for several key purposes:

- Early screening to identify individuals who may require more in-depth follow-up



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- Population or institutional surveillance to monitor trends
- Pre- and post-assessment of support and prevention programs
- Risk classification in sensitive work contexts, such as candidate selection for various professions, provided that the results are not treated as a diagnostic tool or a standalone "exclusion barrier" (World Health Organization, 2018; American Association for Educational Research [AERA], American Psychological Association [APA], and National Council on Measurement in Education [NCME], 2014).

The items on these scales typically encompass three recurring domains: negative emotions (e.g., stress, sadness, emotional detachment); cognitive symptoms (e.g., difficulty concentrating or making decisions, rumination); and physical/psychosomatic indicators (e.g., fatigue, sleep disturbances, or appetite). This constitutes an integrated approach to addressing psychological distress as a general phenomenon, rather than as one associated with a specific disorder. When designing psychometric assessment tools, a time frame for responses (such as the past two or four weeks) is established to minimize recall bias and enhance sensitivity to change. Responses typically rated on a Likert scale based on frequency or intensity are used to produce long-term comparable scores (Kroenke & Spitzer, 2002). Responses are aggregated into a total score, and sometimes sub-scores, which are interpreted using guideline thresholds for screening, not diagnosis. These thresholds should be calibrated locally according to the characteristics of the sample and the intended use (AERA, APA, and NCME, 2014).

As for psychometric properties, they are subject to rigorous psychometric criteria, including evidence of validity (content, structure, and standard validity), reliability (internal consistency and test-retest reliability), and sensitivity to change. Measurement equivalence across groups (e.g., gender, age, and culture) is examined using analyses such as Differential Item Performance (DIF) to ensure fairness and minimize bias (Mokkink et al., 2018; AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014).

When adapting instruments to new languages or cultural contexts, procedures such as translation and reverse translation, expert panels, and field testing are followed to ensure semantic and normative equivalence. The structure is validated—often through confirmatory factor analysis—before formal adoption. Finally, results are interpreted as probabilistic indicators of psychological distress that warrant supportive assessment (e.g., structured interviews or referrals). Rather than making exclusionary decisions, particularly in the context of candidates for teaching positions, it is recommended to integrate assessment within a multi-method approach that includes positive wellbeing indicators, structured interviews, and teaching performance models, while ensuring confidentiality, equal opportunity, and transparency in support pathways.

6.2. The Well-being Approach

The well-being approach is based on the premise that mental health is not merely the absence of symptoms, but rather "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes their capabilities, copes with the normal stresses of life, works productively, and contributes to their community." In this



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context, the components of well-being are understood through three integrated conceptual domains:

- Subjective well-being, which focuses on life satisfaction and a balance between positive and negative emotions (Diener, 1984).
- Psychological well-being, which includes autonomy, control over the environment, purpose in life, personal growth, positive relationships, and self-acceptance (Ryff, 1989).
- Social well-being, which relates to inclusion, contribution, and acceptance within the social structure (Keyes, 2002).

This integrated vision has crystallized in the "thriving mental health" model, which integrates emotional, psychological, and social dimensions along a continuum that distinguishes between flourishing and stagnation without considering them absolute opposites (Keyes, 2005). Contemporary approaches have reinforced this trend through models that highlight positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement as fundamental pillars of well-being (Seligman, 2011). Thus, mental health assessment moves beyond a symptom-based approach to focus on evaluating resources, functional abilities, and social participation.

Regarding measures based on this conception of mental health, international scales offer clear practical applications of the well-being approach. Notable examples include: the World Health Organization's Well-being Index (WHO-5), a concise five-item instrument measuring positive mood, vitality, and interest in life, widely used in screening and follow-up due to its sensitivity to changes (Topp & al., 2015);

and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), a comprehensive instrument focusing on optimism, engagement, and relationship quality, available in both full and abbreviated versions suitable for research and institutional applications. The Mental Wellbeing Short Form (MHC-SF) scale provides a three-dimensional framework encompassing emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing, highlighting the difference between flourishing and decline within a continuum of mental health (Keyes, 2005).

Within the framework of positive psychology, well-being is conceived through key components that include positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement, which together form a comprehensive model of optimal human functioning (Seligman, 2011) as a reference framework for constructing and standardizing psychological scales. These dimensions are translated into measurable operational indicators through scientifically formulated items, allowing for the objective, quantitative assessment of psychological well-being. This activation is not limited to measuring positive aspects only, but extends to include indicators of negative feelings and the level of general health, which ensures the construction of an integrated measurement tool that provides a comprehensive and balanced picture of the individual's psychological state, and enhances the validity and reliability of the scale in research and educational applications. Methodologically, these tools rely on evidence of construct validity, reliability tests, and sensitivity to change, in addition to cultural adaptation procedures based on reverse translation and equivalence verification, according to international standards for psychometric and educational measurement (AERA & al., 2014).



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6.3 Hybrid Measures Combining Well-being and Distress

Hybrid mental health measures are based on the “whole state” or “dual continuity” model, which posits that mental health cannot be reduced to the mere absence of psychopathological symptoms. Rather, it reflects the interaction of two interrelated but distinct dimensions: well-being, which includes positive emotions, meaning, and effective social functioning; and distress or symptomatology, which includes psychopathological symptoms. Accordingly, psychological status is more accurately assessed when indicators of well-being and distress are combined—either through two separate instruments or within a single measure that incorporates both dimensions. Examples include measures that assess positive affect alongside anxiety and depression, or those that balance positive and negative affect within a unified structure (Veit & Ware, 1983).

Hybrid measures of mental health: A model combining the dimensions of well-being and distress, encompassing both positive and negative emotions. In this context, the Mental Health Scale-Shortcut (MHC-SF) is used to measure emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It is often combined with symptom scales to identify distinct patterns of mental health, such as thriving in the absence of symptoms, thriving with accompanying distress, or low well-being without a disorder diagnosis. This approach aligns with the concept of mental health as a holistic state that requires considering both well-being and distress simultaneously (Keyes, 2014).

Recent studies indicate that this two-pronged framework offers greater explanatory and predictive power regarding functioning compared to assessments focused solely on

disorder. It also supports interventions that aim not only to alleviate symptoms but also to effectively promote well-being.

In the context of selecting candidates for the teaching profession, hybrid mental health assessment tools enable the evaluation of a candidate's level of psychological well-being, along with the identification of indicators of distress or disorder that may affect job performance and classroom effectiveness. In practice, the absence of clinical symptoms is not a sufficient criterion for judging a candidate's professional suitability. Rather, the candidate must demonstrate an appropriate level of positive mental health, not merely as the absence of disorder, but as a state manifested in stable positive emotions, a satisfactory level of social well-being, and an effective capacity for balanced psychological interaction within the professional environment. This includes possessing the emotional and social competencies that enable them to cope with the pressures of daily life, build positive professional relationships, and maintain emotional balance in their interactions with students and colleagues, which positively impacts the quality of their teaching performance.

Combining both assessments provides a more accurate indicator of professional performance and teaching effectiveness. Therefore, these tools can be used as screening mechanisms to ensure that candidates possess the mental health necessary to perform their profession to the best of their abilities.



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7. Ethical and Practical Considerations in Psychological Assessment for Teacher Selection

Although the integration of psychological assessment into teacher selection processes offers significant potential benefits, its implementation raises several ethical and practical considerations that require careful attention. Psychological assessment should not be viewed as a mechanism for excluding candidates solely on the basis of test scores; rather, it should be considered one component of a comprehensive evaluation process aimed at identifying strengths, support needs, and professional suitability.

One important concern relates to confidentiality and privacy. Psychological assessments often involve the collection of sensitive personal information, making it essential to ensure that assessment results are handled with strict confidentiality and used only for legitimate professional purposes. Candidates should also be informed about the objectives of the assessment process and the ways in which the results will be utilized.

Another challenge concerns the risk of misclassification. No psychological instrument is entirely free from measurement error. False-positive results may incorrectly identify psychologically healthy candidates as at risk, while false-negative results may fail to detect individuals who require additional support. Consequently, decisions regarding teacher selection should not rely exclusively on psychometric scores but should be supported by multiple sources of evidence.

Issues of fairness and non-discrimination must also be considered. Assessment procedures should be culturally appropriate, scientifically validated, and applied consistently

to all candidates. Particular attention should be given to avoiding biases that may disadvantage individuals from different social, linguistic, or cultural backgrounds.

For these reasons, Contemporary educational and psychological research recommends adopting a multidimensional assessment approach that combines psychological measures with structured interviews, professional competencies assessment, teaching simulations, and indicators of positive mental health and well-being (Klassen & Kim, 2019; AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014).

Therefore, the responsible use of psychological assessment in teacher selection requires balancing the potential benefits of identifying psychologically prepared candidates with the ethical obligation to protect individual rights, ensure fairness, and promote equal professional opportunities.

8. Strategies for Supporting Teachers' Mental Health

The increasing recognition of teachers' mental health as a critical factor in educational quality has led to a growing body of research emphasizing the need for structured and evidence-based support strategies. Teaching is widely acknowledged as a high-demand profession characterized by emotional, cognitive, and social pressures, which expose teachers to elevated levels of stress and burnout. These challenges not only affect teachers' well-being, but also have direct implications for classroom climate, students' outcomes, and overall educational effectiveness (Jennings & Greenberg, 2019).

In response to these challenges, contemporary educational and psychological research has shifted from merely identifying risk factors to developing preventive and intervention-based approaches aimed at promoting teachers'



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psychological well-being. These approaches are grounded in evidence from multiple domains, including educational psychology, positive psychology, and occupational health, highlighting the importance of an integrative approach that combines both individual-focused and organization-based strategies.

Furthermore, recent meta-analyses and systematic reviews have demonstrated that targeted interventions such as stress management programs, mindfulness-based practices, and resilience training can significantly reduce burnout and improve teachers' emotional and professional functioning. These findings reflect a broader understanding of mental health as a dynamic and multidimensional construct that requires continuous support within professional environments.

Therefore, discussing strategies for supporting teachers' mental health is not merely a complementary aspect of educational research, but rather a fundamental component of ensuring sustainable teaching performance and fostering a healthy and effective learning environment.

8.1. Stress Management and Coping Training programs:

Training programs aimed at stress management and coping skills constitute a central component in promoting teachers' mental health, as they directly target the mechanisms through which individuals perceive and respond to occupational stressors. These programs are typically grounded in cognitive-behavioral and transactional models of stress, which emphasize the role of cognitive appraisal and coping processes in shaping psychological outcomes (Richard Lazarus & Susan Folkman, 1984).

In terms of content, stress management training for teachers often includes several core components. First, it focuses on developing cognitive restructuring skills, enabling teachers to identify and modify maladaptive thought patterns associated with stress, such as catastrophizing or negative self-evaluation. This component has been shown to significantly reduce perceived stress and emotional exhaustion in educational settings.

Second, these programs emphasize the development of both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. Problem-focused coping refers to direct efforts to address the underlying causes of stress, such as enhancing classroom management practices or improving time organization and planning. In contrast, emotion-focused coping involves regulating emotional responses to stress through strategies such as relaxation techniques, controlled breathing exercises, and other forms of emotional regulation. Empirical evidence suggests that the flexible and context-appropriate use of both coping styles is associated with improved psychological adjustment and well-being among teachers.

Third, training programs often incorporate skills related to time management and workload organization, which are critical in reducing occupational stress. Effective planning, prioritization of tasks, and boundary-setting strategies help teachers manage professional demands more efficiently and prevent overload.

Furthermore, many intervention programs incorporate relaxation and mindfulness-oriented practices aimed at enhancing teachers' psychological resilience and emotional regulation. These practices commonly include progressive muscle relaxation, guided breathing techniques, and



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attentional control exercises designed to increase present-moment awareness. Empirical studies have consistently shown that such interventions contribute to lowering physiological indicators of stress while promoting greater emotional balance, self-regulation, and psychological stability among teachers.

Finally, contemporary programs increasingly integrate resilience-building components, including self-efficacy enhancement, reflective practices, and adaptive coping flexibility. Such elements contribute to strengthening teachers' long-term capacity to cope with professional pressures and maintain psychological balance in complex educational work environments (Agyapong & al., 2023).

8.2 Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Teachers' Stress Coping

Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) are considered effective strategies for supporting teachers in coping with occupational stress, as they involve training individuals to direct their attention intentionally toward present-moment experiences—such as thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations—without judgment. From a practical perspective, these programs are typically implemented in the form of structured training courses lasting between six to eight weeks, with regular (usually weekly) sessions that combine theoretical input with experiential practice. For instance, teachers are trained in mindful breathing techniques, where they are encouraged to focus on the rhythm of their breathing during stressful classroom situations (e.g., noise or disruptive student behavior), which helps regulate physiological stress responses and reduce immediate emotional reactivity.

In addition, such programs often include the body scan exercise, which aims to enhance awareness of bodily tension associated with professional stress and enables early intervention to alleviate it. Another key component is the development of non-judgmental awareness of thoughts, whereby teachers learn to recognize automatic negative thoughts (e.g., “I cannot manage this classroom” or “I am not a competent teacher”) without becoming cognitively fused with them. This process contributes to reducing rumination and improving cognitive appraisal of stressful situations, in line with the transactional model of stress proposed by Lazarus and Folkman.

In classroom practice, this can be illustrated when a teacher encounters disruptive student behavior; instead of reacting impulsively with anger or immediate punishment, the teacher applies a brief mindful pause, allowing for a more balanced and pedagogically appropriate response, such as redirecting behavior or using positive reinforcement strategies.

Empirical studies have demonstrated that such practices lead to significant reductions in stress and emotional exhaustion, while enhancing emotional regulation and professional attentional capacities among teachers, as well as improving classroom interactions and overall learning climate (Roeser & al., 2013; Jennings & al., 2017). Furthermore, systematic reviews and meta-analyses indicate that integrating mindfulness practices—such as meditation and breathing exercises—into teachers’ daily routines, even for short periods (10–15 minutes), is associated with improvements in psychological well-being and professional resilience (Klingbeil & Renshaw, 2018; Lomas & al., 2019).



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Therefore, the effectiveness of this approach lies not only in its contemplative dimension but also in its practical applicability within everyday classroom situations. It enables teachers to shift from automatic emotional reactions to more mindful and adaptive responses, thereby fostering sustainable professional functioning and enhancing the overall quality of educational practice.

8.3 Positive Psychology Interventions for Teachers' Mental Health

Positive psychology interventions provide a resource-based framework designed to promote teachers' mental well-being by strengthening their positive psychological capacities and improving their overall performance, rather than focusing solely on alleviating stress or symptoms of psychological disorders. Drawing on the principles of positive psychology, particularly the contributions of Seligman and colleagues, these interventions seek to cultivate dimensions such as optimism, gratitude, resilience, and a sense of professional meaning as essential components of psychological well-being. In educational settings, positive psychology interventions are typically delivered through structured practices that can be integrated into teachers' daily professional experiences.

One common strategy involves gratitude-based activities, such as journaling and expressing appreciation, which encourage teachers to focus on the supportive and meaningful aspects of their personal and professional lives, rather than solely on work-related stress. These practices have been associated with higher levels of positive emotions and lower levels of emotional burnout. Similarly, strengths-based

approaches aim to help teachers recognize their personal strengths—such as creativity, empathy, perseverance, and emotional understanding—and consciously apply them in their classroom interactions and teaching practices. For example, teachers who consider interpersonal sensitivity a strength might use this trait to foster supportive relationships with students and address classroom challenges constructively.

Early intervention programs also focus on developing positive thinking and reframing concepts positively.

Through these approaches, teachers learn to reinterpret challenging professional situations from a more adaptive and growth-oriented perspective. For example, a disruptive classroom environment can be viewed not as evidence of professional inadequacy, but as an opportunity to improve teaching strategies and classroom management. Furthermore, meaning-focused interventions encourage teachers to reconnect with the broader significance and social value of teaching by reflecting on its impact on students' academic and personal development. This process contributes to enhanced professional motivation, commitment, and long-term psychological well-being. Empirical research supports the effectiveness of PPIs in educational settings. Studies have shown that these interventions contribute to increased well-being, job satisfaction, and resilience, while reducing symptoms of stress and burnout among teachers (Seligman & al., 2009; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Moreover, meta-analytic evidence indicates that even brief positive psychology activities can produce significant improvements in psychological well-being and emotional functioning.

Therefore, the value of Positive Psychology Interventions lies in their dual focus on enhancing well-being and building



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enduring psychological resources. By promoting positive emotions and adaptive cognitive patterns, these interventions enable teachers not only to cope more effectively with occupational stress but also to thrive professionally and contribute to a more supportive and engaging learning environment.

8.4 Organizational and School Climate Interventions for Teachers' Mental Health

Organizational and school climate interventions constitute a systemic and context-oriented approach to enhancing teachers' mental health by addressing the institutional and environmental factors that influence their everyday professional experiences. Unlike approaches that focus solely on individual coping skills, these interventions seek to improve the broader working environment through modifications in leadership practices, workload organization, collegial relationships, and the availability of institutional support and resources. From this perspective, teachers' psychological well-being is viewed as deeply connected to the overall quality of the organizational climate and the professional conditions within which teaching and learning take place

A key dimension of this approach concerns the role of school leadership in shaping a supportive professional environment. Leadership practices that encourage participation, recognize teachers' efforts, and maintain open channels of communication contribute to fostering a sense of professional agency and psychological safety. For example, involving teachers in pedagogical decision-making or school improvement initiatives can enhance their sense of ownership

and reduce feelings of marginalization. In contrast, rigid and hierarchical management styles may exacerbate stress and undermine motivation.

Another critical aspect relates to the organization of work demands. Excessive administrative responsibilities, time pressure, and role ambiguity are frequently identified as major sources of occupational stress. Consequently, interventions at this level often aim to rebalance job demands by streamlining administrative tasks, clarifying role expectations, and allowing greater flexibility in scheduling. Such adjustments not only alleviate workload pressure but also enable teachers to allocate more cognitive and emotional resources to instructional activities. (Bakker & Demerouti,2017)

In addition, the social dimension of the school environment plays a central role in shaping teachers' well-being. Establishing collaborative cultures—through mechanisms such as peer support systems, mentoring programs, and professional learning communities—can mitigate professional isolation and reinforce collective efficacy. For instance, structured opportunities for teachers to exchange experiences and co-construct solutions to classroom challenges can function as both emotional support and professional development.

Furthermore, some schools have begun to institutionalize well-being practices by integrating formal support structures, including access to counseling services, well-being workshops, and designated spaces for rest and recovery. These initiatives signal organizational recognition of mental health as a legitimate professional concern rather than a purely individual responsibility.



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From a theoretical standpoint, this approach aligns with contemporary models in occupational psychology that emphasize the interaction between job demands and available resources in shaping well-being and performance. Enhancing organizational resources—such as autonomy, social support, and recognition—can buffer the negative effects of high demands and contribute to sustained professional engagement. (Bakker & Demerouti,2017)

In sum, organizational and school climate interventions offer a comprehensive framework for addressing teachers' mental health by targeting the systemic conditions that underlie occupational stress. By shifting the focus from individual adaptation to institutional responsibility, this approach provides a more sustainable pathway toward improving both teacher well-being and educational effectiveness.

Conclusion

This review has highlighted the growing importance of teachers' mental health as a multidimensional construct encompassing psychological well-being, emotional functioning, resilience, and the capacity to cope effectively with professional demands. The literature examined in this article demonstrates that teachers' mental health is closely associated with teaching effectiveness, classroom climate, student outcomes, and the overall quality of educational processes.

The accumulated theoretical literature and empirical findings further emphasize the importance of considering

mental health within the selection and recruitment processes of teaching profession candidates. Such consideration can serve as a scientifically grounded mechanism for identifying individuals who possess the psychological resources, emotional stability, and professional readiness required to meet the complex demands of contemporary teaching. Beyond the absence of psychological difficulties, particular attention should be given to indicators of positive mental health, including psychological and social well-being, resilience, positive emotional functioning, and effective interpersonal competence.

Furthermore, the literature highlights the value of evidence-based interventions and supportive organizational practices in promoting teachers' mental health throughout their professional careers. Stress management programs, mindfulness-based interventions, positive psychology approaches, and supportive school climates have all been shown to contribute to teachers' well-being, professional engagement, and long-term effectiveness.

At the same time, the use of psychological assessment in teacher selection should be approached with caution and guided by principles of scientific rigor, fairness, confidentiality, and respect for individual rights. Given the complexity of mental health and the inherent limitations of psychometric measures, assessment results should not be used as the sole basis for selection decisions. Rather, psychological assessment should be integrated within a comprehensive evaluation framework that combines multiple sources of evidence, including professional competencies, structured interviews, teaching performance indicators, and measures of positive mental health. Such an approach can enhance the validity and fairness of selection



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procedures while minimizing the risk of misclassification or unjust exclusion of potentially effective candidates.

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