

## The level of personal well-being among a sample of middle school teachers in Djelfa

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### Abstract:

The current study aimed to identify the level of personal (subjective) well-being among a sample of middle school teachers in Djelfa ., and the differences between the sexes (male, female) in the level of personal well-being. To achieve the objectives of the study, the descriptive approach was used, and as a study tool, the Al-Khatib and Al-Qar'an scale (2020) was used to measure the level of personal well-being, consisting of (49) items. The study sample consisted of 53 male and female professors, and the results obtained were as follows: The study sample is characterized by a high level of personal well-being, and the study indicated that there are no differences in the level of personal well-being between the sexes

**Keywords:** personal well-being; teacher; primary education;

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

For a long time, psychology and its scholars focused their efforts, research, and studies on the negative aspects of human personality - psychological and mental disorders - while overlooking the positive side of life. The emergence of Positive Psychology marked a significant shift, introducing a modern branch dedicated to studying individuals' strengths and positive traits - such as optimism, satisfaction, psychological flow, and well-being - to reinforce personal strengths, foster a sense of happiness and belonging, and encourage adaptation to life's challenges and stressors, thereby promoting normal psychological functioning.

Researchers in positive psychology have centered their work on traits and capacities that support perseverance, resilience, and mental health. Teachers, similar to other societal members, often bear heavy responsibilities- educating future generations and transmitting knowledge, information, and cultural heritage - leading to exposure to pressures and negative experiences that challenge their health and adjustment. As a result, teachers require psychological resources that enhance resilience and mental immunity, enabling them to feel comfort and subjective well-being.

Carol Ryff defines psychological well-being as a global sense of positive functioning, manifested through behavioral indicators such as high self-satisfaction and life satisfaction, purposeful goal pursuit, autonomy in decision-making, and the capacity for positive and enduring social relationships. This concept is closely tied to feelings of happiness, tranquility, and inner peace.

Numerous Western studies have investigated personal well-being from a psychological perspective. Ed Diener, a prominent researcher, posits that psychological well-being comprises two components: cognitive evaluations of life satisfaction and the balance between positive and negative emotions. These evaluations include affective reactions to life events, general mood, and satisfaction with domains such as marriage, work, and friendships.( (Fatma, 2015, p. 5)

Dafallah & Othman (Dafallah, Othman, & Ali, 2016, p. 13) describe “personal well-being” or “being-well” as an overarching indicator encompassing psychological, social, and physical dimensions. They state that achieving high well-being is central to human life despite potential obstacles. Influential factors include emotional balance, cognitive appraisals of life's joys and challenges, quality of life, social relationships, and personality traits. Given work's pivotal role in human life-shaping identity, fulfillment, and social status; the workplace environment is crucial for life satisfaction. Literature highlights job satisfaction as a significant factor that correlates positively with mental and physical health and overall quality of life (Khuraiba, 2016, p. 414).

The growing attention to personal well-being in contemporary psychology underscores its importance. An individual's comfort and life satisfaction depend heavily on their interpretation of life experiences. This inner state supports effective adaptation and social interaction. Thus, personal well-being is foundational to reinforcing the self and enabling individuals to face daily challenges.

Key studies Lu (1999), Abdel-Khaleq (2008), Rashmi with Odward & Lawrence (2008), Abdullah et al. (2009), and Al-Zahrani (2013) consistently affirm that personal well-being is a central dimension of mental health across all life stages (Mahboob, 2017, p. 4).

With the rise of positive psychology, new variables such as optimism, resilience, life quality, and psychological well-being (or “optimal existence”) emerged as mechanisms to cope with adversity and support quality of life. Among them, teachers represent a crucial social group tasked with shaping future generations. Despite the importance of their role, teachers face significant stress, pressure, and emotional strain that impact their well-being. This study investigates the extent of teachers’ personal well-being.

Although teaching holds profound social value, it is often emotionally demanding. Education professionals frequently experience stress due to challenging conditions and heavy responsibilities, which can lead to job dissatisfaction, mental health issues, and decreased well-being. Teachers’ well-being directly influences their performance, student interactions, and professional growth. Emotional strain or instability can negatively affect student engagement and performance.

### **Research Questions:**

1. What is the level of personal well-being among middle school teachers?
2. Are there statistically significant gender differences in personal well-being among middle school teachers?

### **Hypotheses:**

- Middle school teachers exhibit a high level of personal well-being.
- No statistically significant gender differences exist in personal well-being (male vs. female).

### **Objectives:**

- To identify teachers’ level of personal well-being in a key societal segment—middle school.
- To analyze well-being differences based on gender.

## **2. Significance of the study**

The study’s significance centers on its focus on personal well-being, a core variable in positive psychology. Its importance is further enhanced by concentrating on middle school teachers - a vital demographic - by evaluating their well-being levels.

Examining personal well-being in workplace contexts is relevant as work significantly influences individuals' life satisfaction and overall well-being. Investigating well-being within educational settings offers insights into psychological conditions that foster professional efficiency and human development.

### **3. Conceptual Definitions**

#### **3.1. Personal Well-Being (Subjective Well-Being)**

In English, the compound term well-being refers to an individual's condition in terms of psychological, physical, and overall wellness. The word being conveys notions such as existence, identity, life, or essence, while well implies positive states such as good health, comfort, prosperity, and emotional ease.

The term has been translated into Arabic in various ways, reflecting diverse conceptual understandings. Some interpret it as synonymous with happiness, proposing translations like "optimal existence" or "quality of life", while others equate it with psychological health or mental wellness. Algerian researcher Habib Tabellouine (University of Oran 2) suggested translating it as psychological satisfaction (Maamria, 2020, p. 2).

According to Diener (2000), subjective well-being is defined as individuals' affective and cognitive evaluations of their lives. It includes how satisfied people feel with their lives, the prevalence of positive over negative emotions, and the extent to which they engage in enjoyable, meaningful activities. Well-being is associated with frequent positive experiences, low levels of distress, and a general sense of satisfaction with life. The concept centers on how individuals assess their life trajectories and personal experiences. In light of the above, personal well-being can be described as the degree to which individuals experience psychological happiness and satisfaction, and how they evaluate both their past and present life circumstances (Mahboob, 2017, p. 4).

#### **3.2. Teacher**

A teacher is defined as an individual responsible for educating and guiding future generations in formal educational settings by transmitting knowledge and training students to achieve academic success and personal growth in their daily lives.

#### **3.3. Middle School Level**

In Algeria, the middle school level represents the second stage of formal education. It spans four academic years and concludes with the Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen (BEM), a national exam that qualifies students for secondary education.

## **7. Literature Review**

### **Messaoudi's Study (2022)**

Titled Psychological Well-being among Primary School Teachers, this study aimed to assess the level of psychological well-being among the sample and examine differences based on gender, seniority, and workplace. The researcher employed a descriptive methodology, utilizing two instruments: the Comminus Scale for Psychological Well-being and the PANAS Scale for Emotional Balance. The sample included 346 male and female teachers. Findings revealed a high level of psychological well-being, with no statistically significant differences attributable to gender, seniority, or workplace.

### **Marzouq & Hussein's Study (2022)**

Entitled Self-Well-being and Its Relationship with Conscientiousness among Middle School Teachers, this study explored the correlation between self-well-being and conscientiousness, as well as gender-based differences. The researchers employed a descriptive design and used the Self-Well-being Scale by Pontin et al. (2013) and the Conscientiousness Scale by Costa & McCrae (1992). The sample consisted of 550 male and female teachers. The findings showed a significant correlation between self-well-being and conscientiousness, with gender-based differences favoring male teachers (Marzouq & Hussein, 2022).

### **Zaqawa's Study (2021)**

Titled Measuring Personal Well-being among Secondary and University Students, this study aimed to assess personal well-being among high school and university students and examine differences based on gender and academic level. Using an analytical descriptive method, the researcher employed Commins's Personal Well-being Scale (2003) on a sample of 100 students. The findings indicated a high level of personal well-being, with no statistically significant differences by gender or academic level (Zaqawa, 2021).

### **Ala & Elwad's Study (2019)**

Titled The Relationship Between Psychological Well-being and Emotional Intelligence among Healthcare Workers: A Field Study, this study aimed to measure both emotional intelligence and psychological well-being, while also analyzing gender-based differences. The descriptive method was used, along with standard scales for both variables. The sample included 380 healthcare professionals (doctors and nurses). Results showed moderate levels of both emotional intelligence and psychological well-being, with statistically significant gender differences (Alla & Elwad, 2019).

### **Al-Mamouri & Mohabbis's Study (2016)**

Titled Self-Well-being among University Students, this study measured self-well-being and examined potential differences based on gender and academic specialization. Using a descriptive methodology and a Self-Well-being Scale, the study surveyed 400 university students. The

findings revealed that students did not report high levels of self-well-being, and no significant differences were found in relation to gender or specialization (Al-Maamouri & Muhabbis, 2016).

## **8. Commentary on the Literature Review**

A review of these studies reveals that most have focused on assessing psychological or well-being across various demographic groups, including educators, students, and healthcare workers. The present study aligns with those by Messaoudi (2022) and Marzouq & Ali (2022) in its focus on teachers as the primary sample.

All the studies, including the current one, adopted the descriptive research method, which is particularly suitable for exploratory and diagnostic investigations of this nature. They provided valuable contributions to the formulation of the study's problem, research questions, and theoretical grounding.

Furthermore, these studies assisted in selecting an appropriate research instrument, as their diverse and validated scales offered insight into the most effective tools for assessing personal well-being

## **9. Theoretical Approaches Explaining Personal Well-Being**

The following are some theoretical perspectives that have attempted to explain the causes of personal well-being, as outlined by (Mahboob, 2017, pp. 6-7). These perspectives include:

### **9.1. Cognitive-Affective Approach**

In 1994, Edward Diener was among the first researchers to introduce the term “subjective well-being,” going beyond the traditional concept of happiness as a mere positive emotional state. This concept emphasizes the individual's comprehensive cognitive evaluation of life quality, incorporating two primary components: the emotional and the cognitive aspects. An individual attains a state of well-being when experiencing a high level of positive emotions, minimizing negative feelings to the lowest possible level, and engaging in activities that are meaningful and valuable to them. Furthermore, achieving well-being requires the satisfaction of basic needs and a general sense of life satisfaction. These emotional experiences are reflected in individuals' responses and interactions with everyday events.

### **9.2. Social Comparison Approach**

In 1985, Micalos introduced the concept of “life satisfaction discrepancy,” which suggests that a person's sense of happiness largely depends on the comparisons made between their current life circumstances and those of others, or between their past and present. According to this perspective, individuals feel happier and more satisfied if they perceive their current situation as better than others' or better than their own past. Conversely, if comparisons lead them to believe others or their past conditions were better, they may experience sadness and dissatisfaction. Research by Lyubomirsky and Ross found that happy individuals tend to

compare themselves only with those who are worse off, while unhappy individuals compare themselves both upward and downward. Additionally, studies by Dutton and Brown indicate that individuals engage in comparisons when they believe it will enhance their sense of happiness, and avoid such comparisons when they expect them to result in frustration or negative emotions.

### **9.3. Goal Achievement Approach**

In 1960, Wilson asserted that the fulfillment of needs contributes to happiness, while deprivation leads to unhappiness. Philosophers have long debated whether happiness is better achieved through the satisfaction or suppression of desires, as well as the prioritization of goals and desires with the most profound impact on one's life. Several researchers agree that individuals may have a clear awareness of their goals and that personal values play a vital role in shaping these objectives. Generally, there is consensus on the strong correlation between the fulfillment of needs and goals and the experience of happiness. The notion of happiness is fundamentally linked to the achievement of desires and aspirations, raising important questions about the complex relationship between pain and pleasure. The greater the sense of deprivation, the more intense the joy experienced upon achieving these goals. Thus, fulfilling needs and aspirations serves as a key to attaining the highest levels of satisfaction and well-being.

## **10. Components of Personal Well-Being (Subjective Well-Being)**

According to (Hamida, 2013, pp. 264-265), personal well-being consists of three core components:

### **10.1. Positive Affect**

This refers to a pleasant emotional state manifested through feelings of joy, happiness, self-confidence, elation, and enjoyment of life. It is also associated with lower levels of negative emotions such as sadness, anger, shame, and despair. Positive affect reflects the individual's sense of enthusiasm, energy, and alertness.

### **10.2. Negative Affect**

This denotes an uncomfortable emotional state characterized by feelings of anxiety, fear, anger, and depression, as well as emotions such as guilt and shame. This dimension reflects the individual's response to negative emotions and unstable mood states, such as neuroticism. The affective dimension, encompassing both positive and negative affect, outlines the general framework of the mood experiences that individuals undergo and is currently referred to as "affective well-being."

### 10.3. Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a subjective process through which individuals assess the quality of their lives based on their own standards, making it a conscious cognitive judgment that reflects one's overall perception of life.

Research indicates that cognitive aspects of well-being (such as life satisfaction) are relatively independent from affective aspects (positive or negative affect). However, these dimensions are interrelated to varying degrees, with the strength of the association depending on contextual and individual factors (Hamida, 2013, p. 266)

## 11. Methodological Procedures

### 11.1. Methodology

The researcher adopted the descriptive approach in this study, as it is concerned with identifying the conditions and relationships that exist among facts and realities. This method includes a degree of interpretation of the collected and organized data. Descriptive research in the field of education provides factual information about the current state of various phenomena that affect educators in their professional practice. Such information has practical value in either supporting existing practices or guiding potential modifications (Morsi, 1994, p. 270).

The descriptive method is considered the most appropriate for this type of research, as it aims to objectively describe the phenomenon under investigation. Al-Agha defines it as an approach that focuses on studying events, phenomena, and ongoing research practices available for analysis, without the researcher's deliberate intervention in their course. This requires the researcher to engage with these phenomena through both description and analysis (Al-Agha, 1997, p. 41).

### 11.2. Research Sample

The study sample consisted of 53 middle school teachers in the state of Djelfa. Participants were intentionally selected from a number of schools in the northern region of the governorate. The table below shows the sample distribution based on the study variables.

**Table (01): Distribution of the Sample According to Gender**

| <b>Gender</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Male          | 18               | 33.96%                |
| Female        | 35               | 66.03%                |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>53</b>        | <b>100%</b>           |

**Source:** Prepared by the researcher.

The data presented in Table (01) indicate that the majority of the sample were female teachers, accounting for 66.03% of the total participants. In contrast, male teachers represented 33.96% of the sample.

## 12. Research Instruments

To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher used a scale developed by Al-Khatib and Al-Qar'an (2020) consisting of 49 items designed to measure the level of subjective well-being. Each item on the scale was rated using a five-point Likert scale as follows:

| Response Options | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|------------------|-------|--------|-----------|-------|--------|
| Score Value      | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      |

Regarding the psychometric properties of the scale, the validity and reliability were confirmed in the original study through expert judgment and internal construct validity. The correlation coefficients ranged between (0.375–0.836), all of which were statistically significant.

The reliability of the subjective well-being scale was verified using the test-retest method and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which reached 0.90, indicating high reliability.

In the present study, the scale's validity was verified using the expert judgment method, as it was reviewed by faculty members from the Department of Psychology at the University of Djelfa, who confirmed that the scale is suitable and valid for use. Additionally, reliability was tested on a pilot sample of 30 teachers (not part of the main study sample), and Cronbach's Alpha reached **0.78**, indicating an acceptable and reliable level.

### 12.4 Statistical Analysis

The following statistical tools were used in the current study:

- Percentages
- Cronbach's Alpha coefficient
- Arithmetic mean
- Standard deviation
- Independent samples T-test

## 13. Presentation and Discussion of Results

The first hypothesis stated: "The level of personal well-being among middle school teachers is high."

To answer this hypothesis, the arithmetic means, standard deviations, and rating levels of the teachers' responses to the subjective well-being scale were calculated. Table (02) presents these results:

| Sample Size | Theoretical Mean | Calculated Mean | Std. Deviation | Degrees of Freedom | T-value | Significance Level | Decision                  |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 53          | 110              | 131.452         | 15.29          | 52                 | 22.588  | <b>0.05</b>        | Statistically significant |

Based on the results presented in the table above, it is evident that the mean score of the participants on the overall personal well-being scale ( $M = 131.452$ ) is significantly higher than the theoretical mean of the questionnaire (110). This finding indicates that middle school teachers enjoy a high level of personal well-being. The T-value (22.588) is positive and statistically significant at the 0.05 level, thus supporting the hypothesis that the participants experience elevated levels of personal well-being.

This result reflects that middle school teachers perceive themselves positively, experience emotional and psychological well-being, and report job satisfaction and contentment with their lives. They demonstrate a high level of positive affect, which contributes to a balanced cognitive evaluation of their life experiences, consistent with Diener's (1994) conceptualization of well-being.

Moreover, the majority of the sample are individuals who chose the teaching profession willingly, driven by a sense of purpose and moral commitment, despite the profession's challenges. The ability to find joy in life, alongside faith and acceptance of fate, further nurtures this state of well-being and satisfaction. Additionally, the achievement of personal goals is considered a crucial factor in enhancing one's subjective well-being, as noted by Wilson (1960), who asserted that meeting personal needs leads to happiness, while deprivation results in dissatisfaction.

These findings are in agreement with those of Messaoudi (2022) and Marzouq & Hussein's (2022), who similarly found high levels of psychological and subjective well-being among their respective study samples. However, they differ from the results of Al-Maamouri & Muhabbis (2016), which indicated low levels of subjective well-being among university students in their sample.

## Second Hypothesis and Discussion

The second hypothesis states that there are no statistically significant differences in personal well-being among middle school teachers attributable to gender (male or female).

To address this hypothesis, the means, standard deviations, and standard errors for the participants' responses on the personal well-being scale were calculated. Tables (03) and (04) summarize these results:

**Table 03: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Personal Well-being by Gender**

| Gender | Sample Size (N) | Mean Score | Standard Deviation | Standard Error |
|--------|-----------------|------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Male   | 18              | 140.66     | 15.766             | 3.716          |
| Female | 35              | 141.87     | 15.264             | 2.580          |

**Table 04: Independent Samples T-Test for Differences in Personal Well-Being Means by Gender**

| T-test for Equality of Means | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | Std. Error Difference | Mean Difference | Sig. (2-tailed) | Degrees of Freedom (df) | t-value | Sig.  | F     |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Equal variances assumed      | Lower: 7.7965<br>Upper: 10.177            | 1.190                 | 4.476           | 0.791           | 51                      | 0.266   | 0.778 | 0.081 |
| Equal variances not assumed  | Lower: 8.0092<br>Upper: 10.390            | 1.190                 | 4.524           | 0.794           | 33.54                   | 0.263   | —     | —     |

Table 03 shows a close similarity between the mean scores of male ( $M = 140.66$ ) and female ( $M = 141.87$ ) teachers, with relatively low standard deviations, indicating homogeneity in personal well-being levels across genders.

Table 04 presents the results of the T-test for independent samples, where the significance value was  $\text{Sig.} = 0.791$ , which is higher than the alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), indicating no statistically significant difference. The T-value was also low ( $T = 0.266$ ), confirming that gender does not influence the level of personal well-being in the current study.

These results indicate that both male and female teachers today share similar responsibilities, workloads, and life circumstances, leading to comparable levels of self-assessed personal well-being. It also appears that both genders evaluate their lives in similar ways, reflecting the evolving social roles and expectations in contemporary society. At present, men and women perform nearly identical roles, particularly after women have entered various fields of life, sharing responsibilities and tasks with men. In many cases, women now bear the full burden both inside and outside the home, while men have partially withdrawn from their traditional roles. This is evident in the growing dominance of women across most professional sectors.

Education, in particular, has become one of the most appealing fields for women, as it aligns with their intrinsic role of caregiving and instruction. These changes in the social structure have shaped a new lifestyle, where both genders increasingly share similar aspirations and goals. Additionally, the improvement in living standards and women's financial independence from men, along with the enjoyment of nearly full rights, have led women to experience a relative sense of satisfaction, having achieved a respectable status compared to past eras in which they were deprived of even their most basic rights.

This finding aligns with the social comparison theory introduced by Micalos (1985), which suggests that an individual's sense of happiness is significantly influenced by comparisons between their current life circumstances and those of others, or between their past and present. A person tends to feel satisfied and happy if they perceive their current situation to be better than others', or an improvement over their past. Conversely, if the comparison leads them to believe that others—or their own past—offered better conditions, feelings of dissatisfaction and distress may arise.

These findings are consistent with those reported in prior studies by Messaoudi (2022), Zaqawa (2021), Marzouk and Hussein (2022), and Alla and El-Wad (2019), which found no statistically significant gender differences in either personal or psychological well-being. However, the results contrast with those of Al-Maamouri and Muhabbis (2016), whose study revealed significant gender-related differences in subjective well-being.

## **Conclusion**

The study concluded that middle school teachers enjoy a high level of psychological well-being, which can be attributed to the specific characteristics of the sample—namely, their satisfaction with their professional and social achievements. Furthermore, the results indicated no statistically significant gender differences in psychological well-being, as both male and female teachers reported similar levels. This finding can be explained by the fact that men and women now hold equivalent professional positions within the educational system.

In conclusion, psychological well-being -also referred to as subjective well-being or personal happiness - is one of the most widely discussed topics in the field of positive psychology and has become a central focus of numerous scientific studies and investigations. Mental health is no longer defined merely by the absence of psychological disorders, but rather by an individual's ability to enjoy life, sustain positive emotional states, and effectively adapt to their environment.

Individuals with high levels of personal well-being tend to experience hope, satisfaction, and emotional balance. They are more likely to engage actively in their social environments and maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships. Despite the many challenges and stressors inherent in the teaching profession—one of the most demanding occupations—teachers continue to perform their educational duties with remarkable dedication and enthusiasm.

The results of this study reaffirm that middle school teachers possess a high degree of subjective well-being, as reflected in their positive self-evaluations and satisfaction with their

professional roles. Moreover, the absence of gender-based differences further supports the notion of professional and social parity between male and female educators in today's society.

Nevertheless, future research is encouraged to explore personal well-being from different angles, in order to deepen both theoretical and practical understanding of the concept and to address the methodological challenges faced by researchers. It is also recommended that academic conferences and seminars be organized to highlight the positive aspects of personality and their role in fostering psychological adjustment, achievement, and emotional balance - contributions that are essential for advancing psychological and educational knowledge.

### Recommendations:

1. Work to provide an appropriate and motivating work environment in order to ensure quality performance by making available the necessary material and human resources for employees in the education sector.
2. Reduce teachers' pedagogical burdens by reviewing teaching loads and administrative tasks in a way that promotes professional balance and prevents burnout.
3. Strengthen psychological support programs and training days aimed at helping teachers develop coping strategies to manage professional stress and achieve psychological well-being.
4. Conduct further research on psychological well-being targeting other education staff and administrative personnel, to assess its levels and work toward enhancing it across all segments of the educational system.

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