

School Principal-Teachers' Interactions in Relation to Teachers' Professional Well-Being

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Abstract: *This study determined the relationship of school principal-teacher interaction and teachers' professional well-being in the public secondary schools of Zone 1 of the Schools Division of Zambales during the Academic Year 2020-2021. A quantitative descriptive research design was employed in the study. A survey questionnaire was the main data gathering instrument to collect responses from the public secondary school teachers. The survey questionnaire consisted of item indicators with an excellent internal consistency of Cronbach's coefficient of 0.93. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the teacher-respondents are female, in their early adulthood, with MA units, a Teacher I and with adequate years in service. The teacher-respondents perceived that their School Principals "Always" interact in enhancing their teachers' professional well-being. The teacher-respondents strongly agree with regards to their professional well-being as indicated of their high level of well-being. Another salient finding of the study revealed a significant difference on the school principal-teacher interaction as to Supervision and Evaluation when they are grouped according to sex. There is also a significant difference on the professional well-being of teachers as to Professional Development when they are grouped according to age and educational attainment; significant differences surfaced as to Positive Relation with Colleagues when teachers are grouped according to educational attainment as well as to Autonomy in Professional Activities when they are grouped according to sex. It was also revealed that a significant relationship exists between school principal-teacher interaction and teachers' professional well-being.*

Keywords— *teachers' professional well-being, principal-teacher interaction, professional development, mentoring*

1. INTRODUCTION

School principals interact with teachers, teachers interact with other teachers, and teachers interact with students — all affecting the others' well-being. School principals also play a central role in ensuring a positive environment for teaching and learning in schools. Recent educational policy developments, including high-stakes teacher evaluation systems and increased levels of external accountability, have further raised expectations for school principals to improve school climate, instructional practice, interaction with teachers and student outcomes. School principals are responsible for a set of responsibilities (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016; Spillane & Hunt, 2010; Spillane & Lee, 2014) such as internal relations to teachers and other school staff. The internal relations capture the relational aspects of principals' behavior, focused on within-school interpersonal relationships (Grissom & Loeb, 2011). This includes behaviors related to developing and sustaining student and family relationships and attending school activities, as well as handling staff conflicts and engaging informal and social interactions with staff. In a study conducted by Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton in 2003, it was revealed that successful teacher evaluation processes include interactions between principal and educator. Recently, due to the abrupt changes in educational landscape, the education sector was forced to shift into remote and distance learning. Many teachers felt burnout and fatigue. The global pandemic left everyone, including teachers nothing but to embrace the new normal. Hence, new tasks and expectations must meet. Existing literature cited the importance of teachers' well-being as evident in several research (Reckmeyer, 2012; Yildirim, 2014; Liebowitz, Lo & Porter, 2019). This situation had

highlighted the importance of teacher's well-being in the delivery of quality education and even gave emphasis on the role of school principals in maintaining the well-being of teachers. Teacher professional well-being, which include measures of teacher's emotional state in relation to teaching career, such as satisfaction, engagement, and collegial relationships. Studies showed suggestive evidence that principals' focus on generalized support for teachers is more closely related to their sense of well-being. Moreover, by influencing teachers' and students' well-being, ultimately the teachers' and students' health, productivity, social quality, financial outcomes, absenteeism, and engagement are affected (Beck & Harter, 2014). At present, there were relatively few studies that focused on determining the impact of school leaders' interaction to teachers' well-being. There was a knowledge gap about the relationship of principal-teacher interaction and teacher's well-being especially in the Philippines. Hence, this research study provided new insights, perspectives and views about this matter which would be added to the body of knowledge. This study provided further understanding on how school leaders in Zambales may impact and affect the teachers' professional well-being. The findings of this study gave opportunities for school principals to refine their managerial and leadership practices to be most effective when interacting with teachers especially now that we are dealing with a global crisis. Furthermore, findings of this study provided inputs for future psychosocial support wellness program among teachers.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This research was conducted using a descriptive quantitative research approach. Specifically, this study utilized a correlational research design. The correlational research is a type of non-experimental research in which the researcher measures two variables, for instance in this research the principal-teacher interaction and teachers' professional well-being and assessed the statistical relationship between them with little or no effort to control extraneous variables.

2.2 Conceptual Framework of the Study

This section starts with the presentation of a conceptual framework that connects a school organization's manager's (principal) interaction with his or her employees (teachers) and the school organization's employees' (teachers') professional well-being.

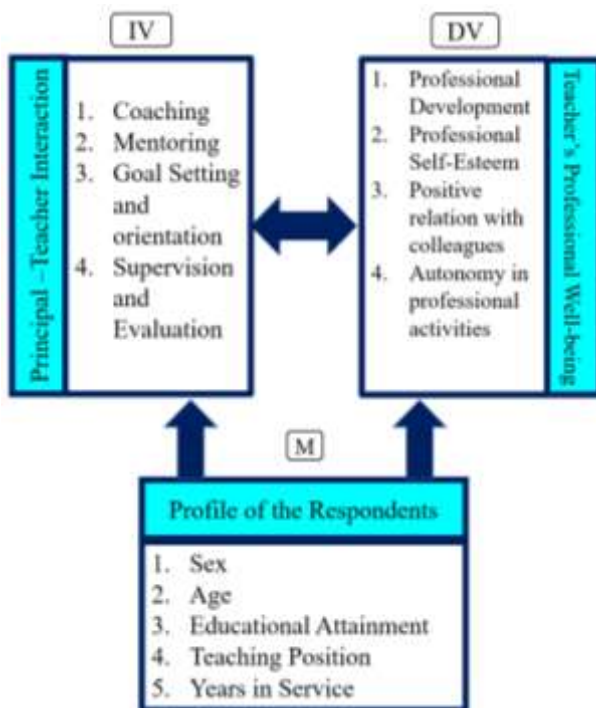


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

The two subsections of the conceptual framework are Principal Interactions and Teacher's Professional Well-being. The conceptual framework of this study explains the importance of teacher well-being and one type of intervention that may affect teacher well-being, specifically, the interactions principals have with teachers as their manager. The impact of well-being on people and organizations has been studied for many years, but more heavily in the past three decades (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). With the manager having a greater influence than other employees within the workplace setting (O'Boyle & Harter, 2014; Price, 2012), the interactions each employee does or does not have with his or her manager have an impact on the teachers' professional well-being (Price, 2012; Rath & Harter, 2010). When narrowed to the educational realm, and specifically to teacher well-being, the effects and

outcomes of a principal's interactions with teachers can be viewed through a conceptual framework focusing on principal interactions and teachers' professional well-being.

Hence, this conceptual framework provided a roadmap for how to view the research studies and results, and explain the gap in current research, which this study intended to address.

2.3 Data Collection

The first step undertaken by the researcher in the data collection was seeking the permission and approval of the Schools Division Superintendent, DepEd Division of Zambales. This was done through a letter signed by the researcher and noted by the research adviser, Dr. Esmen M. Cabal and Dr. Marie Fe D. De Guzman, Director of PRMSU Graduate School. After securing the endorsement letter from the SDS Division Office, Iba, Zambales, the researcher sought assistance from the principals of the identified school – respondents in the Division to administer the survey questionnaire to the respondents. The researcher utilized Google Forms to prevent direct physical contact with the respondents due to COVID 19 threat. But to follow up respondents who were not be able to answer the Electronic Survey, the researcher personally administered the instrument to the respondents and have retrieved it a week after. The responses of the respondents were treated with utmost confidentiality.

2.4 Data Analysis

The result of the survey was tabulated by the researcher with numerical data to conduct the statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize, organize, and condense the large numbers of observations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Creswell (2014) indicates that inferential statistics aim to relate variables or to compare groups in terms of variables to draw inferences or make predictions from the sample to the population. Using statistical techniques, greater objectivity is ensured compared to qualitative approaches (Baumard & Ibert, 2007). Because the research design was standardized, it is possible to replicate and duplicate quantitative research studies (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, & Delpont, 2011). The variables were explained and described concerning the relationship between the variables to make significant inferences. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software and MS Excel were used for the computations and interpretations of data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the gathered and processed data using tabular form, interpreted, and analyzed to provide a better and clear understanding on the problems.

3.1. Profile of the Teacher-respondents

Table 1 shows the frequency, percentage, and mean distribution on the teacher-respondents' profile variables of sex, age, educational attainment, teaching position, and years in service.

Table 1 Frequency and Percentage Distribution on the Teacher-respondents' Profile Variables

Profile Variables		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	127	25.10
	Female	378	74.90
	Total	505	100.00
Age (Years) Mean = 36.96 or 37 years old	61 and above	5	1.00
	56-60	17	3.40
	51-55	29	5.70
	46-50	49	9.70
	41-45	61	12.10
	36-40	71	14.10
	31-35	127	25.10
	26-30	121	24.00
	21-25	25	5.00
	Total	505	100.00
Educational Attainment	Doctorate Degree	9	1.80
	with Doctorate Units	7	1.40
	Masters Degree	70	13.90
	with MA units	270	53.50
	Bachelor's Degree	149	29.50
	Total	505	100.00
Profile Variables		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
	Master Teacher II	13	2.60
	Master Teacher I	19	3.70
	Teacher III	99	19.60
	Teacher II	98	19.40
	Teacher I	276	54.70
	Total	505	100.00
Years in Service Mean = 10.98 or 11 years	36 and above	9	1.80
	31-35	14	2.80
	26-30	25	5.00
	21-25	34	6.70
	16-20	35	6.90
	11-15	58	11.50
	6-10	177	35.00
	1-5	153	30.30
Total	505	100.00	

Sex. Majority of the teacher-respondents with 378 or 74.90% are female while 127 or 25.10% are male. The composition of respondents has more female teachers than male. This is similarly observed in the Department of Education in the Philippines where female teachers outnumber the male teachers. Furthermore, the percentage of licensed professional women is 63.7%, as opposed to licensed professional men at 36.3%. Teachers account for the highest percentage at 44%, with teaching considered a female dominated profession. Furthermore, among those with academic degrees, 56.2% were females and 43.8% males. Similarly, among those with post baccalaureate courses, women outnumbered male at 56.3 % than males at 43.7%.

Age. Most of the teacher-respondents with 127 or 25.10% are from age group 31-35 years old; 121 or 24.00% are from age group 26-30 years old; 71 or 14.10% are from age group 36-40 years old; 61 or 12.10% are from age group 41-45 years old; 49 or 9.70% are from age group 46-50 years old; 29 or 5.70% are from age group 51-55 years old; 25 or 5.00% are from age group 21-25 years old; 17 or 3.40% are from age group 56-60 years old; and 5 or 1.00% are 61 years old and above. The computed mean age of teacher-respondents was 36.96 or 37 years old. The findings of this study in terms of age mean age of the teacher-respondents is supported by the study conducted by Elevado (2020) wherein the findings revealed that mean age of the teachers in the Division is 37.

Educational Attainment. Majority of the teacher-respondents with 270 or 53.50% are with MA units; 149 or 29.50% are Bachelor's degree holders; 70 or 13.90% are Master's degree holders; 9 or 1.80% are Doctorate degree holders; and 7 or 1.40% are with Doctorate units.

Teaching Position. Most of the teacher-respondents with 276 or 54.70% are Teacher I; 97 or 19.60% are Teacher III; 98 or 19.40% are Teacher II; 19 or 3.70% are Master Teacher I; and 13 or 2.60% are Master Teacher II. This finding is related to the mass hiring of teachers conducted in 2014 during the onset of the implementation of Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013.

Years in Service. There were 177 or 35.00% with 6-10 years in service; 153 or 30.30% with 1-5 years in service; 58 or 11.50% with 11-15 years in service; 35 or 6.90% with 16-20 years in service; 34 or 6.70% with 21-25 years in service; 25 or 5.00% with 26-30 years in service; 14 or 2.80% with 31-35 years in service; and 9 or 1.80% with 36 and above years in service. The computed mean for years in service was 10.98 or 11 years. This finding further supports the result of the study conducted by Edpalin & Meer in 2018 wherein the computed mean of years in service of teachers was also 11 years. The data clearly suggests on the determination and commitment of the respondents in the teaching profession. Committed teachers are someone in love with a field of knowledge, deeply stirred by issues and ideas that change our world, drawn to the dilemmas and potentials of the young people who come into class every day (Maiyani, 2017).

3.2 Perceived Extent of School Principal-teacher Interaction to Enhance Teachers' Professional Well-being as Perceived by Teacher-respondents

The summary on the perceived extent of school principal-teacher interaction to enhance teachers' professional well-being is presented in Table 2.

The teacher-respondents perceived the extent of school principal-teacher interaction to enhance teachers' professional well-being as "Always" manifested on School Principals' Supervision and Evaluation (3.59, rank 1); Coaching and Goal Setting and Orientation (3.57, tied at rank 2.5); and Mentoring (3.53, rank 4).

Table 2 Summary on the Perceived Extent of School Principal-teacher Interaction to Enhance Teachers' Professional Well-being

Factors	Overall Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
1 Coaching	3.57	Always	2.5
2 Mentoring	3.53	Always	4
3 Goal Setting and Orientation	3.57	Always	2.5
4 Supervision and Evaluation	3.59	Always	1
Grand Mean	3.57	Always	

With the grand mean of 3.57, this finding implies that teacher-respondents of Zone 1 of the Schools Division of Zambales perceived that their school principal always interact with them to enhance their professional well-being.

The findings on principal-teacher interaction highlights the positive influence of school principal to teacher's well-being. A principal's interactions with teachers have been shown to have positive impacts on different areas of a school organization, including teacher evaluations (Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003), perceived support for teachers (Mangin, 2007), beginning teacher experiences and professional development (Youngs, 2007) and teacher job satisfaction (Elma, 2013). Furthermore, the principal is the key agent of change and mainly accountable for the effective management of a school and the efficiency of teaching (Kasprzhak 17 et al., 2015).

The principal is also responsible for the well-being of teachers at school (Van der Vyver, 2011). From the abovementioned, school principals, as leaders, are responsible for effective leadership and teachers' well-being in schools.

3.3 Perceived Professional Well-being of Teachers

Table 3 shows the summary on the perceived professional well-being of teachers. The teacher-respondents "Strongly Agree" on their professional well-being as to Professional Development (3.72, rank 1); Positive Relation with Colleagues (3.60, rank 2); Professional Self-esteem (3.57, rank 3); and Autonomy in Professional Activities (3.45, rank 4).

Overall, the teacher-respondents perceived their professional well-being as "Strongly Agree" with a grand mean rating of 3.59.

Table 3 Summary on the Perceived Professional Well-being of Teachers

Dimensions	Overall Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
1 Professional Development	3.72	Strongly Agree	1
2 Professional Self-esteem	3.57	Strongly Agree	3
3 Positive Relation with Colleagues	3.60	Strongly Agree	2
4 Autonomy in Professional Activities	3.45	Strongly Agree	4
Grand Mean	3.59	Strongly Agree	

It is evident in the summary of the findings that teacher-respondents have a high level of professional well-being as supported with a grand mean of 3.59. A comprehensive literature review by Yildirim (2014) produced only two studies focusing specifically on teachers' professional well-being. Butt and Retallick (2002) published an article based on qualitative data gathered from 29 teachers in Canada. They

found an association between teacher professional well-being and feelings of respect, trust, efficacy, and autonomy as a teacher. In the other study, Aelterman et al. (2007) also gathered qualitative data from 1934 Flemish teachers and found that teachers' professional well-being is based on teachers' self-reported professional state, which refers to teachers' perceptions about being effective teachers and finding meaning in the profession of teaching.

3.4 Test of difference on the School Principal-teacher Interaction when Grouped According to Profile Variables

3.4.1 Coaching. The computed significance value (Sig.) for sex (Sig. = 0.701), age (Sig. = 0.723), educational attainment (Sig. = 0.744), teaching position (Sig. = 0.681), and years in the service (Sig. = 0.676) were all greater than (>) 0.05 alpha level of significance. The results indicate that there was no significant difference on the school principal-teacher interaction as to Coaching when respondents are grouped according to sex, age, educational attainment, teaching position and years in the service. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

3.4.2 Mentoring. The computed significance value (Sig.) for sex (Sig. = 0.587), age (Sig. = 0.949), educational attainment (Sig. = 0.291), teaching position (Sig. = 0.875), and years in the service (Sig. = 0.702) were all greater than (>) 0.05 alpha level of significance. The results indicate that there was no significant difference on the school principal-teacher interaction as to Mentoring when respondents are grouped according to sex, age, educational attainment, teaching position and years in the service. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

3.4.3 Goal Setting and Orientation. The computed significance value (Sig.) for sex (Sig. = 0.335), age (Sig. = 0.817), educational attainment (Sig. = 0.424), teaching position (Sig. = 0.701), and years in the service (Sig. = 0.297) were all greater than (>) 0.05 alpha level of significance. The results indicate that there was no significant difference on the school principal-teacher interaction as to Goal Setting and Orientation when respondents are grouped according to sex, age, educational attainment, teaching position and years in the service. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

3.4.4 Supervision and Evaluation. There was a significant difference on the school principal-teacher interaction as to Supervision and Evaluation when respondents are grouped according to sex (Sig. = 0.033). The computed significance value (Sig.) was less than (<) 0.05 alpha level of significance, therefore null hypothesis is rejected. On the other hand, the computed significance value (Sig.) for age (Sig. = 0.879), educational attainment (Sig. = 0.177), teaching position (Sig. = 0.743), and years in the service (Sig. = 0.838) were all greater than (>) 0.05 alpha level of significance. The results indicate that there was no significant difference on the school principal-teacher interaction as to Supervision and Evaluation when respondents are grouped according to age, educational attainment, teaching position and years in the service. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

3.5. Test of difference on the Professional Well-being of Teachers when Grouped According to Profile Variables

3.5.1 Professional Development. There was a significant difference on the professional well-being of teachers as to Professional Development when respondents are grouped according to age (Sig. = 0.029) and educational attainment (Sig. = 0.026). The computed significance values (Sig.) were less than (<) 0.05 alpha level of significance, therefore null hypothesis is rejected.

Meanwhile, the computed significance value (Sig.) for sex (Sig. = 0.267), teaching position (Sig. = 0.222), and years in the service (Sig. = 0.459) were all greater than (>) 0.05 alpha level of significance. The results indicate that there was no significant difference on the professional well-being of teachers as to Professional Development when respondents are grouped according to sex, teaching position, and years in the service. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

3.5.2 Professional Self-Esteem. The computed significance value (Sig.) for sex (Sig. = 0.892), age (Sig. = 0.803), educational attainment (Sig. = 0.388), teaching position (Sig. = 0.312), and years in the service (Sig. = 0.353) were all greater than (>) 0.05 alpha level of significance. The results indicate that there was no significant difference on the professional well-being of teachers as to Professional self-esteem when respondents are grouped according to sex, age, educational attainment, teaching position, and years in the service. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

3.5.3 Positive Relation with Colleagues. There was a significant difference on the professional well-being of teachers as to Positive Relation with Colleagues when respondents are grouped according to educational attainment (Sig. = 0.002). The computed significance value (Sig.) was less than (<) 0.05 alpha level of significance, therefore null hypothesis is rejected. Moreover, the computed significance value (Sig.) for sex (Sig. = 0.707), age (Sig. = 0.807), teaching position (Sig. = 0.180), and years in the service (Sig. = 0.675) were all greater than (>) 0.05 alpha level of significance. The results indicate that there was no significant difference on the professional well-being of teachers as to Positive Relation with Colleagues when respondents are grouped according to sex, age, teaching position, and years in the service. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

3.5.4 Autonomy in Professional Activities. There was a significant difference on the professional well-being of teachers as to Autonomy in Professional Activities when respondents are grouped according to sex (Sig. = 0.009). The computed significance value (Sig.) was less than (<) 0.05 alpha level of significance, therefore null hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, the computed significance value (Sig.) for age (Sig. = 0.642), educational attainment (Sig. = 0.076), teaching position (Sig. = 0.666), and years in the service (Sig. = 0.365) were all greater than (>) 0.05 alpha level of significance. The results indicate that there was no significant difference on the professional well-being of teachers as to Autonomy in Professional Activities when respondents are grouped according to age, educational attainment, teaching position, and years in the service. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

3.6 Test of relationship between the School Principal-teacher Interaction and Teachers’ Professional Well-being

The Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of correlation to determine relationship between the school principal-teacher interaction and teachers’ professional well-being is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation to determine Relationship between the School Principal-teacher Interaction and Teachers’ Professional Well-being

Sources of Correlations		School Principal-teacher Interaction	Teachers’ Professional Well-being	Decision / Interpretation
School Principal-teacher Interaction	Pearson Correlation	1	0.329**	Low Positive Relationship Reject Ho
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	
	N	505	505	
Teachers’ Professional Well-being	Pearson Correlation	0.329**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	505	505	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The computed Pearson r value of 0.329 denotes low positive correlation between school principal-teacher interaction and teachers’ professional well-being. The computed P-value 0.000 is less than (<) 0.01 level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. The result signifies that there is significant relationship between school principal-teacher interaction and teachers’ professional well-being. This further implies that greater school principal-teacher interaction entails greater professional well-being among teachers. This finding is parallel to some of the findings of the study conducted by Liebowitz in 2019. Their analysis has three central findings: (1) they found direct evidence of the relationship between principal behaviors and student achievement (0.08–0.16 SD), teacher well-being (0.34–0.38 SD), teacher instructional practices (0.35 SD), and school organizational health (0.72–0.81 SD).

This study also confirms the result of the study conducted by Reckmeyer in (2020) wherein Results from the analysis showed that the interaction frequency and quality of a principal with a teacher have significant effects on teacher well-being. Similar findings were also reported in the study conducted by Vyver, Kok & Conley in 2020. The results showed a relationship between perceived leadership behavior and well-being.

3.7. The proposed psycho-social wellness program

The proposed psycho-social wellness program has been developed to address the findings of the study as to teachers’ professional development, professional self-esteem, positive relation with colleagues, and autonomy in professional activities.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the summary of the findings, the researcher concluded that most of the teacher-respondents are female, in their early adulthood stage, with MA units, Teacher I and with adequate years in service. The teacher-respondents perceived

that their School Principals “Always” interact in enhancing their professional well-being. The teacher-respondents perceived their professional well-being as “Strongly Agree” that indicates high level of teachers’ professional well-being. There was a significant difference on the school principal-teacher interaction as to Supervision and Evaluation when respondents are grouped according to sex. There was a significant difference on the professional well-being of teachers as to Professional Development when respondents are grouped according to age and educational attainment; significant as to Positive Relation with Colleagues when grouped according to educational attainment; and significant as to Autonomy in Professional Activities when grouped according to sex. There was a significant relationship between school principal-teacher interaction and teachers’ professional well-being.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the summary of findings and the conclusions arrived at, the researcher recommended that the School principal may participate in various seminars regarding different leadership styles to further enhance their leadership skills as part of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Mentoring of teachers through collaboration among school head, seasoned teachers and teachers is proposed to further improve the teaching competencies of newly hired teachers in their respective schools. Mental health and professional well-being activities for teachers considers it to be holistic. Embedding self-care activities such as physical activity, catching up with co-teachers, and setting boundaries around work can support teachers to improve and maintain their professional well-being. School principal may consider inclusion of teacher’s professional autonomy as one of their agenda through regular reviews of teaching and learning policies. Short-term courses, workshops and other training opportunities be developed and implemented, as part of the continuous professional development of principals, to empower principals with the knowledge and skills regarding interpersonal relationship and the influence it has on teachers’ professional well-being. Furthermore, to add to the generalization of research findings, future research should include conducting a longitudinal study over multiple administrations to account for any possible external effects of specific points in time that would increase the validity of predictive results.

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