Forum for Education Studies 2025, 3(4), 2947.
doi: https://doi.org/10.59400/fes2947

Article

Subjective well-being of language teaching professionals: An investigation in the context of English as a foreign language education in China

Bin Chen [1], **Honggang Liu** [2,*]

[1] The High School Affiliated to Soochow University, Suzhou 215006, China
[2] School of International Studies, Soochow University, Suzhou 215006, China
*** Corresponding author:** Honggang Liu, Liuhonggang@suda.edu.cn

CITATION

Chen B, Liu H. Subjective well-being of language teaching professionals: An investigation in the context of English as a foreign language education in China. Forum for Education Studies. 2025; 3(4): 2947. https://doi.org/10.59400/fes2947

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 17 August 2025
Revised: 6 October 2025
Accepted: 13 October 2025
Available online: 20 October 2025

Abstract: Subjective well-being, a central construct in positive psychology, remains underexplored among language educators. To address this gap, this mixed-methods study investigated the structural dimensions of subjective well-being among Chinese junior high school English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers, profiled its manifestations across demographic groups, and identified its ecological sources within workplace contexts. Data were collected from 811 teachers via the Teacher Subjective Well-being Questionnaire, with quantitative analyses including exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, descriptive statistics, and group comparisons. These were supplemented by in-depth semi-structured interviews with four purposively selected participants, analyzed thematically through Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework. Key findings revealed that: (1) EFL teachers' subjective well-being demonstrated a uni-dimensional structure in factor analyses, with items indexing instructional efficacy, institutional belonging, and perceived respect loading onto a single factor; (2) participants reported moderate levels of subjective well-being, experiencing work-related happiness only "sometimes"; (3) group comparisons showed significantly lower well-being among early-career teachers (0–5 years) and those with college degrees compared to their more experienced and better-educated counterparts; and (4) ecological contributors spanned multiple levels—positive interactions with students, colleagues, and administrators (microsystem), supportive institutional policies fostering professional growth (exosystem), and national curricular reforms prompting adaptive teaching practices (macrosystem). These findings advance theoretical understanding of teacher well-being by clarifying its conceptual structure and embeddedness within professional ecologies, while offering actionable insights for fostering teacher development through multi-level support systems.

Keywords: subjective well-being; teacher psychology; English as a foreign language; secondary education; China

1. Introduction

Language teaching is often regarded as a stressful profession and is frequently described as being "in crisis" [1, 2]. In the context of China's educational system, English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers face considerable physical and psychological stress [3, 4]. This stress may stem from ongoing reforms in English language education and a prevailing emphasis on test-driven instruction [3, 5, 6], hence high standards are set for teachers. Additionally, the profession demands that teachers perform emotional labor, consistently displaying positive emotions regardless

of their true feelings [7–9]. These job demands necessitate essential competencies, such as psychological resilience and emotional intelligence, to navigate challenges and succeed in the profession [3, 10–13]. Without these competencies, the demanding nature of the job may lead to professional burnout, decreased well-being, and even hinder teacher retention [14–17]. Thus, exploring teacher psychology is critical.

In response to calls from positive psychology for promoting overall well-being [18], this study focuses on the well-being of language educators. Individuals with high well-being are more likely to lead fulfilling lives and contribute positively to societal development [19]. Researchers have consistently argued that well-being is crucial for teachers' occupational effectiveness and their ability to cope with job-related demands [15, 20, 21]. A body of research has shown that teachers' well-being positively impacts both learners and the workplace environment [22, 23]. Conversely, poor well-being can negatively affect teachers' performance and even lead to detrimental outcomes for students [24, 25]. Therefore, teacher well-being is a key area of research, with comprehensive investigations offering potential benefits for all aspects of education [26].

Defining well-being is a complex, value-laden task [27]. Traditionally, well-being has been conceptualized in two ways: hedonism and eudaimonia [28, 29]. The hedonic approach emphasizes pleasure and positive experiences, defining well-being as the experience of more pleasure and less pain. In contrast, the eudaimonic perspective stresses the importance of realizing one's full potential and finding meaning and satisfaction in life [18, 30]. More recently, an engagement perspective has emerged, highlighting flow experiences where immersion in meaningful and enjoyable activities contributes to well-being [31]. However, these approaches alone fail to capture the full complexity of well-being. Criticisms have arisen over overly generalized and nebulous definitions of the concept [32,33], and debates persist over the distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being [34]. In response, integrative frameworks have emerged. Seligman's PERMA model, for instance, identifies five core elements: (1) positive emotion, (2) engagement, (3) relationships, (4) meaning, and (5) accomplishment [35]. This model integrates hedonic, eudaimonic, and engagement perspectives, framing emotional balance, life meaning, and engagement as core components of well-being. Similarly, Oxford's EMPATHICS model outlines nine factors that contribute to well-being through their interaction: (1) emotion and empathy, (2) meaning and motivation, (3) perseverance, (4) agency and autonomy, (5) time, (6) hardiness and habits of mind, (7) intelligence, (8) character strengths, and (9) self-related factors [36]. These frameworks underscore the complexity of well-being, encompassing not just affective states and life meaning but the full spectrum of human experience [37].

In workplace well-being research, a growing interest has focused on employees' job satisfaction and positive workplace experiences [34], with a particular focus on subjective well-being [38]. Often framed through a hedonic lens, subjective well-being encompasses individuals' affectivity and cognitive evaluations of their lives, characterized by frequent positive affect and high life satisfaction, although negative emotions may still arise [39–41]. As a multidimensional construct,

subjective well-being is grounded in various theoretical perspectives [42, 43]. Recent developments have expanded the concept to include aspects of flourishing and eudaimonic well-being, emphasizing optimal human functioning, a sense of purpose, and engagement [44,45]. For example, the OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-Being propose a tri-dimensional framework that includes life evaluation, affect, and psychological flourishing [46]. This broader conceptualization reflects the growing recognition that life quality assessments may also consider personal growth and functioning across various domains [35, 47]. While cognitive evaluations (e.g., life and job satisfaction) tend to be stable, affective experiences fluctuate in response to immediate contexts [48]. Thus, subjective well-being can be viewed as a dynamic equilibrium between external stressors and an individual's psychological, social, and physical resources [32].

For teachers, subjective well-being pertains to their professional life and workplace conditions. Song et al. define it as "teachers' self-reported experience and assessment of the quality of their working lives and the sense of purpose and capabilities they need to live a happy and fulfilling life as a teacher" [49]. This encompasses two key components: emotional states (e.g., job-related emotions) and job satisfaction (e.g., fulfillment in roles, relationships, and career growth) [50–53]. Eudaimonic aspects further encompass 'teachers' perceptions of autonomy, competence, and the meaningfulness of their work. Theoretical insights also highlight the role of cognitive appraisals—particularly perceived control over tasks—in shaping subjective well-being [54], with self-efficacy, or confidence, being a well-documented factor [55–57]. Ultimately, teachers' subjective well-being reflects their holistic professional functioning, integrating emotions, performance evaluations, and workplace conditions.

In education, subjective well-being significantly influences teachers' mental health, instructional practices, and professional development [38, 58, 59], while also affecting student outcomes [21, 60, 61]. Studies examining teachers' subjective well-being often employ a tripartite framework—affective experiences, life satisfaction, and eudaimonic well-being [49]. Given the domain-specificity of life satisfaction [41, 62], teachers' subjective well-being is best examined within educational contexts [63]. For instance, Yıldırım's study identified collegial support, constructive feedback, school climate, student-centered teaching, and professional growth as key contributors to teacher well-being [64]. Similarly, Renshaw et al. distinguished teachers' subjective well-being from general well-being, emphasizing its context-specific [65]. Their Teacher Subjective Well-being Questionnaire (TSWQ) identified school connectedness and teaching efficacy as major indicators of subjective well-being. Building on Dodge et al.'s dynamic model [32], Reitbauer et al. proposed an interactive balance framework, wherein teachers' subjective well-being emerges from the interplay of motivation, job satisfaction, agency, and self-efficacy as teachers navigate individual, professional, and organizational challenges [48].

As important as it is to capture the nature of educators' well-being, research has also emerged exploring effective approaches to enhancing it. Several studies have focused on broader aspects of teachers' job life, such as institutional support and

policy changes [66–69]. These efforts underscore the understanding that well-being, though individually perceived, is also socially determined [69–71]. However, as Jeliseh et al. note, an overemphasis on macro-level factors risks neglecting individual capacities that foster well-being [72]. From an ecological perspective, well-being is seen as influenced across multiple contexts [26]. Not only do organizational and social factors shape teachers' well-being, but teachers themselves also play an active role in generating their subjective experiences. Given its multidimensionality [42, 43], a holistic approach—integrating intra- and extra-personal dimensions—is essential for identifying resources and demands that shape teachers' equilibrium and well-being.

In summary, this study set out to investigate EFL teachers' subjective well-being through an ecological lens, employing a mixed-methods design to address the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the internal structure of subjective well-being among EFL teachers?

RQ2: What characterizes their subjective well-being profile?

RQ3: What workplace ecological factors contribute to their subjective well-being?

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Participants

The present study aimed to provide a comprehensive profile of EFL teachers' subjective well-being in China. To achieve this, participants were recruited through a combination of convenience and snowball sampling strategies [73, 74]. After multiple rounds of recruitment, a total of 811 valid teacher participants were included in the study. Of these, 409 teachers participated in a pilot study designed to explore the conceptual structure of teachers' subjective well-being. A separate sample of 402 teachers took part in the validation phase of the study (formal study), during which the measurement tool was refined, and statistical analyses were conducted to provide an overview of their workplace well-being and professional functioning. Additionally, four teachers voluntarily contributed to a qualitative phase through in-depth interviews, offering nuanced perspectives on their job experiences.

Demographic information for the 811 teachers in the quantitative study revealed that male teachers constituted a small proportion of the sample (N_{male} = 56, 6.9%; N_{female} = 755, 93.1%). This gender distribution reflects the broader trend in China's language teaching profession, where females dominate. Educationally, most participants held bachelor's degrees (80.0%, N = 649), followed by master's degrees (N = 148, 18.2%) and college diplomas (N = 14, 1.7%). Regarding teaching experience, 16.4% (N = 133) had fewer than five years of experience, while 83.6% (N = 678) were more experienced professionals. Further details are presented in **Table 1**.

The interviewees were purposively selected to ensure diversity across gender, region, teaching experience, and educational background. This approach aimed to capture a representative spectrum of teachers' ecological workplace circumstances. Profiles of interviewees are detailed in **Table 2**.

Table 1. Demographic profile of survey participants.

Variable	Classification	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	56	6.9
	Female	755	93.1
	College	14	1.7
Educational degree	Bachelor	649	80.0
	Master	148	18.2
Years of teaching experience	0–5	133	16.4
	6–10	119	14.7
	11–15	126	15.5
	16–20	117	14.4
	≥21	316	39.0
Professional title	None	51	6.3
	Third-grade	7	0.9
	Second-grade	149	18.4
	First-grade	318	39.2
	Senior (associate)	283	34.9
	Senior	3	0.4
Type of school	Ordinary	637	78.5
	Key	174	21.5
Location	Country	257	31.7
	County	165	20.3
	City	389	48.0

Table 2. Demographic profile of interviewees.

Interviewees	Gender	Region	Years of teaching experience	Educational degree
Fu	Female	Southern China	4 years	Master
Liu	Female	Northeastern China	18 years	Bachelor
Yan	Male	Southern China	3 years	Master
Yang	Male	Eastern China	3 years	Bachelor

2.2. Instrument

2.2.1. Questionnaire

Teachers' subjective experiences of mental wellness, effectiveness, and professional development were assessed using the TSWQ developed by Renshaw and colleagues [65]. The eight-item scale measures two dimensions of professional functioning indicative of thriving in teaching: teaching effectiveness (e.g., "I am good at helping students learn new things") and school connectedness (e.g., "I feel like I belong at this school"). Responses were recorded on a four-point Likert scale (1 = almost never to 4 = almost always). To better align the items with language educators' contexts, minor wording changes were made (e.g., "I am a successful teacher" was revised to "I am a successful English teacher"). The adapted scale showed excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.950$).

2.2.2. Interview guide

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit in-depth accounts of EFL teachers' professional lives and to identify salient factors shaping their well-being. The guide probed participants' prior learning experiences; early-career interactions with students, parents, colleagues, and school leaders; current professional experiences; and perceptions of the broader impact of educational policies.

2.3. Data collection and analysis

The questionnaire was administered online via a local platform—Sojump (Wenjuanxing) (https://www.wjx.cn/). The link was initially shared with a group of teachers, who were invited to distribute it to colleagues in other schools or regions; this snowball sampling continued until a sufficient number of responses were obtained. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents could provide contact details if they were interested in a follow-up interview.

Ethical procedures were observed throughout. Prior to data collection, approval was obtained from the researchers' institutional ethics committee. Participants received detailed information about the study's purpose, potential risks, and their rights, including the voluntary nature of participation and the option to withdraw at any time. All personal information was anonymized to protect privacy, and the data were used solely for academic purposes.

Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 24.0. In the pilot study, we examined univariate normality, conducted item analyses, and performed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to evaluate the measure. In the formal study, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) tested the factor structure identified in the EFA. Following item removal based on CFA results, we computed descriptive statistics and conducted group comparisons to provide an overview of participants' subjective well-being.

Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify ecological factors influencing teachers' well-being. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's nested ecological systems theory [75], themes were organized into four layers: (1) microsystem—immediate settings in which teachers functioned (e.g., classroom teaching, collaboration with colleagues, interactions with school leaders); (2) mesosystem—interactions between immediate settings (not salient in the present data and therefore excluded from the final model); (3) exosystem—indirect influences from settings in which teachers did not directly participate (e.g., school administration, students' family environments); and (4) macrosystem—broader socioeconomic, cultural, and political contexts (e.g., national educational policies, curriculum standards, government-appointed textbooks). To enhance reliability, researchers coded independently and then reviewed and reconciled differences until consensus was achieved.

3. Results

3.1. Inner structure of subjective well-being

3.1.1. Univariate normality test and item analysis

Data from both the pilot (N = 409) and formal study (N = 402) met univariate normality assumptions: all items had skewness and kurtosis within ±2 [76]. See **Tables 3** and **4** for details. To examine item discrimination, an independent samples t-test compared the top 27% and bottom 27% of scorers; all items showed significant group differences, indicating adequate discrimination. Item-total correlations also met the conventional criterion ($r \geq 0.3$) proposed by Field [77]. Results are reported in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Results of the univariate normality test and item analysis in the pilot study.

Items	Skewness		Kurtosis		27% lowest (n = 124)		27% highest (n = 121)		*MD*	*t*	*df*	Item-total correlation coefficient (r)
	Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*				
Q01	−0.219	0.121	−1.214	0.241	1.40	0.523	2.83	0.477	−1.431	−22.382***	241.938	0.767***
Q02	−0.064	0.121	−1.024	0.241	1.38	0.535	2.71	0.473	−1.332	−20.653***	240.720	0.798***
Q03	−0.086	0.121	−1.263	0.241	1.23	0.439	2.89	0.311	−1.667	−34.371***	221.943	0.868***
Q04	−0.426	0.121	−0.661	0.241	1.85	0.542	2.88	0.331	−1.029	−17.996***	204.429	0.705***
Q05	−0.047	0.121	−1.186	0.241	1.35	0.542	2.77	0.443	−1.422	−22.520***	235.788	0.785***
Q06	0.174	0.121	−1.156	0.241	1.23	0.444	2.64	0.577	−1.402	−21.282***	225.206	0.778***
Q07	−0.141	0.121	−0.962	0.241	1.44	0.530	2.85	0.380	−1.408	−23.925***	223.125	0.816***
Q08	−0.334	0.121	−0.694	0.241	1.77	0.609	2.88	0.321	−1.110	−17.897***	187.433	0.753***

Note: *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 4. Results of the univariate normality test in the formal study.

Items	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
Q01	−0.292	0.122	−1.172	0.243
Q02	−0.052	0.122	−0.972	0.243
Q03	−0.097	0.122	−1.290	0.243
Q04	−0.459	0.122	−0.678	0.243
Q05	−0.047	0.122	−1.134	0.243
Q06	0.183	0.122	−1.132	0.243
Q07	−0.170	0.122	−1.087	0.243
Q08	−0.347	0.122	−0.722	0.243

3.1.2. Exploratory factor analysis

EFA was conducted with the pilot sample (N = 409). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.914, and Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded χ^2 = 1897.999, df = 28, $p < 0.001$, supporting factorability. A loading threshold of |0.4| was applied [78]. Following Green and Salkind [79], items were excluded if they had (1) loadings below |0.4|; (2) cross-loadings above |0.4|; (3) cross-loading differences less than |0.2|; or (4) communalities below 0.4. The analysis yielded a single-factor solution explaining 56.309% of the variance, exceeding the recommended threshold of 55% for EFA [80], and supporting a unidimensional structure for EFL teachers' subjective well-being. The eight-item solution demonstrated strong reliability (Cronbach's α = 0.910). See **Table 5**.

Table 5. Results of exploratory factor analysis.

Items	Factor	Communalities
Q03: I can really be myself at this school.	0.860	0.740
Q07: I am treated with respect at this school.	0.791	0.626
Q02: I am a successful teacher.	0.767	0.588
Q05: I feel like people at this school care about me.	0.744	0.553
Q06: I have accomplished a lot as a teacher.	0.737	0.543
Q01: I feel like I belong at this school.	0.717	0.514
Q08: I feel like my teaching is effective and helpful.	0.716	0.513
Q04: I am good at helping students learn new things.	0.655	0.429
Cumulative % of variance explained	56.309	—
Cronbach's *a*	0.910	—

Note: Extraction method: principal axis factoring; one factor extracted; five iterations required.

3.1.3. Confirmatory factor analysis

CFA (N = 402) evaluated the hypothesized one-factor model using multiple fit indices: the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom (χ^2/df), goodness-of-fit index

(GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), with acceptable thresholds of $\chi^2/df \leq 3$, GFI ≥ 0.90, CFI ≥ 0.90, NFI ≥ 0.90, TLI ≥ 0.90, RMSEA ≤ 0.08, and SRMR ≤ 0.10 [78].

The initial measurement model did not exhibit satisfactory fit (**Figure 1**). After revising the model—removing three items (Q03, Q05, and Q06) and allowing the error terms for items Q01 and Q07 (e01, e07) to covary—the final unidimensional model showed an excellent fit (**Figure 2**). The revised scale also exhibited strong reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.868$).

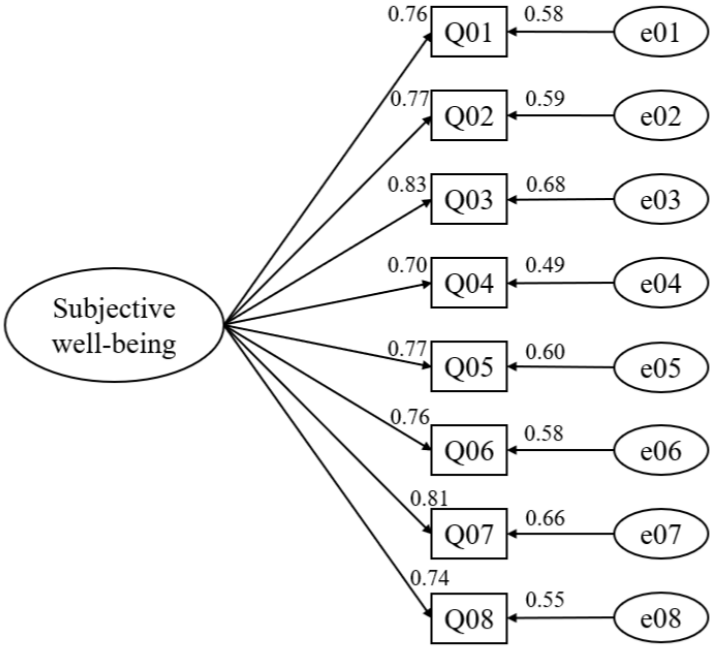

Figure 1. Initial measurement model before modification: $\chi^2/df = 9.727$, GFI = 0.879, CFI = 0.914, NFI = 0.906, TLI = 0.880, RMSEA = 0.148, and SRMR = 0.050.

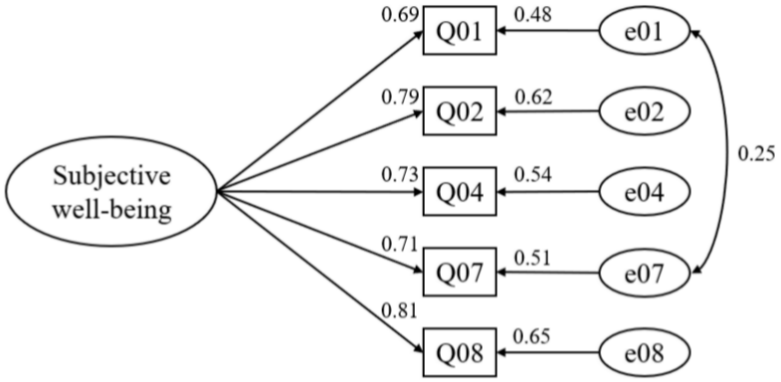

Figure 2. Final measurement model after modification: $\chi^2/df = 1.440$, GFI = 0.884, CFI = 0.998, NFI = 0.994, TLI = 0.995, RMSEA = 0.033, and SRMR = 0.012.

3.2. Descriptive statistics and group comparisons of subjective well-being

Descriptive statistics ($N = 402$, **Table 6**) indicated a mean subjective well-being score of 2.19 ($SD = 0.56$). The maximum observed global score was 3.00, corresponding to "often" on the four-point scale. Thus, no participant reported

experiencing work-related happiness "almost always", and most reported feeling self-efficacious, respected, and a sense of belonging "sometimes". Item-level patterns mirrored this overall profile: teachers reported moderate frequencies of well-being related to belonging, teaching effectiveness, and esteem.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of subjective well-being.

Items	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
Q01: I feel like I belong at this school.	1.00	3.00	2.17	0.749
Q02: I am a successful teacher.	1.00	3.00	2.04	0.703
Q04: I am good at helping students learn new things.	1.00	3.00	2.35	0.638
Q07: I am treated with respect at this school.	1.00	3.00	2.11	0.726
Q08: I feel like my teaching is effective and helpful.	1.00	3.00	2.28	0.649
Global subjective well-being	1.00	3.00	2.19	0.562

Group comparisons (N = 402) further clarified this pattern. Independent samples t-tests detected no significant differences in well-being by gender or by school type (**Table 7**). In contrast, one-way ANOVAs indicated significant differences by years of teaching experience and by educational degree, but no differences across teachers working in country, county, and city settings. Regarding years of experience (**Table 8**), teachers with 0–5 years reported lower overall well-being than those with 11 or more years, whereas teachers with 6–10 years did not differ significantly from other groups. Post hoc item-level comparisons suggested that early-career teachers (0–5 years) felt less successful (Q02) and less effective in introducing new knowledge (Q04) than teachers with more than 20 years of experience; their comparatively lower well-being was generally consistent across items rather than confined to a single domain.

Table 7. Comparisons of subjective well-being across gender and school type.

Items	Male (n = 28)		Female (n = 374)		*MD*	*t* (400)	Key school (n = 80)		Ordinary school (n = 322)		*MD*	*t* (400)
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Global subjective well-being	2.18	0.629	2.19	0.557	−0.011	−0.102	2.23	0.536	2.18	0.568	0.051	0.728
Q01	2.14	0.803	2.17	0.746	−0.031	−0.210	2.20	0.786	2.16	0.741	0.035	0.378
Q02	2.07	0.766	2.03	0.700	0.037	0.266	2.05	0.727	2.03	0.699	0.016	0.180
Q04	2.43	0.690	2.34	0.635	0.086	0.690	2.44	0.613	2.33	0.643	0.111	1.399
Q07	2.04	0.838	2.11	0.718	−0.079	−0.557	2.10	0.704	2.11	0.732	−0.012	−0.130
Q08	2.21	0.738	2.28	0.64	−0.069	−0.543	2.36	0.621	2.26	0.655	0.105	1.293

Table 8. Comparisons of subjective well-being across years of teaching.

Items	0–5 years (n = 65)		6–10 years (n = 53)		11–15 years (n = 61)		16–20 years (n = 62)		Above 20 years (n = 161)		F (4, 397)	Post hoc	*MD*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Global subjective well-being	1.90	0.543	2.06	0.508	2.23	0.567	2.29	0.531	2.29	0.554	7.201***	0–5 years < 11–15 years 0–5 years < 16–20 years 0–5 years < above 20 years	−0.328** −0.382*** −0.387***
Q01	1.92	0.797	1.94	0.602	2.30	0.760	2.23	0.777	2.28	0.726	4.498**	0–5 years < above 20 years 6–10 years < above 20 years	−0.356* −0.336*
Q02	1.66	0.644	1.89	0.725	2.00	0.730	2.16	0.658	2.20	0.663	8.670***	0–5 years < 16–20 years 0–5 years < above 20 years 6–10 years < above 20 years	−0.500*** −0.543*** −0.318*
Q04	2.06	0.659	2.28	0.632	2.44	0.646	2.37	0.579	2.44	0.621	4.799***	0–5 years < 11–15 years 0–5 years < above 20 years	−0.381** −0.379***
Q07	1.91	0.723	1.96	0.678	2.11	0.733	2.27	0.657	2.17	0.746	2.976*	0–5 years < 16–20 years	−0.367*
Q08	1.97	0.637	2.23	0.577	2.31	0.672	2.40	0.586	2.36	0.657	5.242***	0–5 years < 11–15 years 0–5 years < 16–20 years 0–5 years < above 20 years	−0.342* −0.434** −0.391***

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Educational attainment showed a similar gradient (**Table 9**). Teachers holding college degrees reported lower well-being than bachelor's degree holders, while no significant difference emerged between bachelor's and master's degree holders at the global level. Item-level analyses indicated that teachers with college degrees reported lower instructional self-efficacy (Q04 and Q08) and perceived respect (Q07) relative to those with higher degrees. Finally, location-based comparisons revealed no significant differences among teachers in country, county, and city schools (**Table 10**), suggesting that, within this sample, subjective well-being was more strongly patterned by professional experience and educational qualifications than by institutional location or school type.

Table 9. Comparisons of subjective well-being across educational degrees.

Items	College (n = 8)		Bachelor (n = 315)		Master (n = 79)		F (2, 399)	Post hoc	*MD*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Global subjective well-being	1.68	0.465	2.22	0.564	2.10	0.527	5.032**	College < Bachelor	−0.549*
Q01	1.17	0.707	2.19	0.760	2.13	0.705	1.549	N/A	N/A
Q02	1.75	0.707	2.07	0.706	1.94	0.686	1.819	N/A	N/A
Q04	1.75	0.707	2.39	0.626	2.23	0.639	5.859**	College < Bachelor	−0.644*
Q07	1.38	0.518	2.16	0.739	2.00	0.641	5.765**	College < Bachelor College < Master	−0.781** −0.625*
Q08	1.75	0.707	2.31	0.646	2.22	0.634	3.395*	College < Bachelor	−0.558*

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 10. Comparisons of subjective well-being across institutional locations.

Items	Country (n = 126)		County (n = 87)		City (n = 189)		F (2, 399)	Post hoc	*MD*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Global subjective well-being	2.10	0.571	2.26	0.498	2.22	0.577	2.534	N/A	N/A
Q01	2.09	0.759	2.20	0.679	2.22	0.772	1.188	N/A	N/A
Q02	1.95	0.691	2.13	0.679	2.05	0.720	1.669	N/A	N/A
Q04	2.24	0.674	2.39	0.578	2.40	0.633	2.769	N/A	N/A
Q07	2.06	0.752	2.20	0.644	2.11	0.743	0.960	N/A	N/A
Q08	2.16	0.650	2.37	0.593	2.32	0.664	3.351*	N/A	N/A

Note: * $p < 0.05$.

Taken together, the descriptive profile points to mid-level well-being with limited endorsement of high-frequency positive experiences, and highlights early-career status and lower formal qualifications as potential risk markers for diminished self-efficacy, perceived respect, and sense of belonging.

3.3. Ecological features of subjective well-being

3.3.1. Microsystem: Teacher–student, teacher–colleague, and teacher–leader interactions as sources of well-being

The microsystem encompasses the immediate settings in which teachers directly engage and experience well-being. In classrooms, our participants reported a strong sense of effectiveness when they successfully motivated student engagement, set clear goals, and adopted non-test-oriented instructional practices.

For example, Teacher Fu observed that her adolescent students were largely unmoved by material incentives. She replaced such rewards with commendatory letters

to parents—an approach that increased student engagement and enhanced her sense of pedagogical efficacy.

> *Junior high students are not motivated by material rewards. No matter how much I try to provide rewards like stationery, they don't respond. So, I changed my approach—Now I write commendatory letters to their parents. If they behave well, I send a letter praising them. This strategy has proven effective in motivating their learning in class.*
>
> (Teacher Fu, December 2024)

Perceived effectiveness was also evident in teacher-guided goal setting. Teacher Liu described encouraging a high-potential student to articulate his own targets by reflecting on his learning habits (e.g., last-minute exam preparation). After discussing expectations with his parents, the student independently set goals that aligned with Liu's hopes, reinforcing her sense of instructional efficacy.

> *I didn't set specific goals for this student. However, after a private conversation with his parents in which I expressed my hope that he would rank in the top ten, they were amazed. They asked, 'Did you talk to him about this goal?' I hadn't, but after our discussion, he had decided on his own to aim for the top ten. It was evident that the conversation had prompted him to reflect on his learning and set clear goals. This experience reinforced my belief in the value of open conversations with students.*
>
> (Teacher Liu, November 2024)

While English education in China often prioritizes test preparation, Teacher Yang intentionally avoided repetitive drills. By reviewing language tests himself, he distilled essential content for students, helping them focus on core skills. This approach underscored his professional engagement and contributed to a sense of success.

> *When it comes to textbooks and exam preparation, I feel accomplished knowing that I've spared my students from endless drills by thoroughly reviewing test materials myself.*
>
> (Teacher Yang, September 2024)

Positive collegial interactions also supported well-being and fostered professional growth. Teacher Liu attributed her development to senior colleagues who encouraged her to undertake challenging tasks early in her career, enabling her to accumulate experience and become a core teacher in her region.

> *I've greatly benefited from the support of my colleagues throughout my career. At the start, I wasn't sure how to develop professionally, especially since none of my family members were teachers. But senior colleagues pushed me to take on tasks I was hesitant to accept. I did them, and over time, I realized that I wasn't doing these things just for them but for my own professional growth.*
>
> (Teacher Liu, November 2024)

School leaders likewise shaped teachers' well-being. In one instance, a vice

principal helped Teacher Fu manage a chaotic moment during exam-paper distribution and offered a simple strategy: write instructions on the blackboard beforehand. This small adjustment markedly improved classroom order and strengthened her sense of professional development.

> *Once, when distributing exam papers, the classroom became chaotic, and I panicked, thinking the vice principal would disapprove. However, he helped manage the situation and later advised me to write the instructions on the blackboard beforehand. This small change made a huge difference in maintaining order, and I now always write instructions before the class begins.*
>
> (Teacher Fu, December 2024)

Early in her career, Fu struggled with classroom management, yet school leaders opted to support rather than criticize. By modelling effective strategies, the vice principal facilitated Fu's growth.

3.3.2. Exosystem: Supportive institutional policies as sources of subjective well-being

The exosystem captures the effects of institutional policies and regulations in which teachers are not direct participants, but that nonetheless influence their feelings, performance, and development. Interviewees described administrative policies—often formulated without direct teacher input—as key to enhancing their sense of belonging and perceived institutional respect.

At Fu's school, strong emphasis was placed on novice teachers' development through mentorship and encouragement to participate in teaching competitions, signaling sustained support from colleagues and leadership.

> *The school emphasizes professional development, especially for new teachers. They encourage us to participate in teaching competitions and training programs. The leadership is supportive and fosters a positive work environment, with no strict hierarchy or rigidity.*
>
> (Teacher Fu, December 2024)

Similar accounts from Teachers Liu, Yan, and Yang underscored the role of institutional care and guidance in fostering well-being.

3.3.3. Macrosystem: Educational policy advancement as triggers of subjective-well-being-inducing practices

The macrosystem encompasses broader socioeconomic, cultural, and political forces that shape teachers' ecological contexts. In this study, national reforms and shifts in the educational landscape were salient contributors to teachers' subjective well-being.

Teacher Yan, for instance, embraced curriculum reforms that emphasize cognitive and logical development in English education. He integrated thinking-visualization tools (e.g., Venn diagrams, spider maps, mind maps) to scaffold textual analysis and encourage critical thinking—even when gains in test performance were modest.

> *We employ thinking visualization tools—such as Venn diagrams, spider maps, and mind maps—to deconstruct texts into structured diagrams. Personally, I've gained a lot from this approach. However, while some students genuinely engage with these tools, many others tend to replicate the diagrams superficially without a deeper understanding. Still, I believe these tools are valuable, particularly for more advanced students. Admittedly, our students' application of these methods might be limited; they may not drastically improve exam results, but they undoubtedly help broaden critical thinking skills. This aligns with the thinking capacity dimension emphasized in the national English curriculum standards, which prioritizes cognitive development alongside academic performance.*
>
> (Teacher Yan, December 2024)

Although candid about limited effects on test outcomes, Yan viewed these practices as integral to nurturing students' reasoning. His sense of efficacy derived not only from achievement metrics but also from fostering broader development—an orientation reinforced by national reform.

With the rollout of revised curriculum standards, provincial bureaus introduced textbooks aligned with the new guidelines. In this context, Teacher Liu proactively accessed and studied the forthcoming materials, resolving long-standing uncertainties about the syllabus and clarifying instructional objectives. This engagement strengthened her understanding of English language education and reinforced her identity as an effective teacher.

> *Initially, I didn't start preparing for the new term until after the school year began. Instead, during the summer break—right after my students graduated—I spent time searching for updated teaching materials. At the time, the official textbooks hadn't been finalized, so I sourced materials online, printed them out, and began lesson planning unit by unit. As I worked through this process, I realized something unexpected: I actually grew to prefer the new materials. Previously, when aligning the old textbooks with the curriculum guidelines and exam syllabi, I always felt a disconnect—like the content and requirements didn't quite mesh. But with the new materials, it was as if a veil had been lifted. Suddenly, the textbook content aligned seamlessly with the exam syllabi. For the first time, I truly grasped what the exam standards were asking for and what educational experts intended teachers to emphasize. It became crystal clear. Paradoxically, as a teacher, I found myself genuinely embracing this new textbook.*
>
> (Teacher Liu, November 2024)

Overall, language-teaching professionals operate within a multilayered ecology and actively navigate its dimensions to thrive. Microsystem interactions with students, colleagues, and leaders nurture accomplishment, effectiveness, and institutional support. Exosystem policies that promote professional development and facilitate school-based work further enhance well-being. At the macrosystem level, national

policies prompt shifts in practice to meet evolving social and educational demands. This adaptive process strengthens professional competence and bolsters teachers' sense of success and fulfilment. Collectively, these layers constitute the ecological model of language educators' subjective well-being (**Figure 3**), illustrating how interconnected contexts shape professional experience.

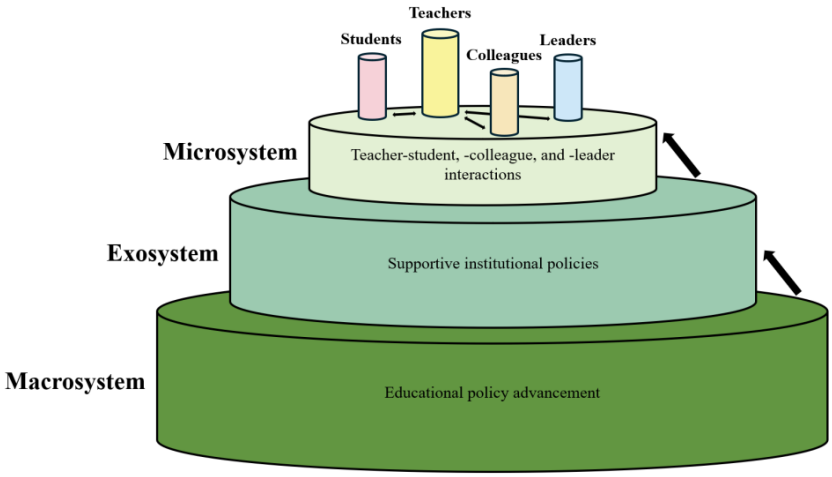

Figure 3. Ecological system model of subjective well-being.

4. Discussion

This study examined the internal structure of EFL teachers' subjective well-being, described its profile, and developed a model of its ecological contributors. With respect to structure, factor-analytic results supported a unidimensional solution. This suggests that, despite prior characterizations of subjective well-being as complex and multi-faceted [18, 42, 43, 46, 65], its components may be tightly interwoven and empirically difficult to distinguish. In other words, teachers' self-perceptions of effectiveness and accomplishment, their positive affect, and their workplace evaluations jointly inform judgements of happiness, thriving, and flourishing. This finding calls into question the two-factor structure proposed by Renshaw and colleagues [65], in which teaching effectiveness and school connectedness are treated as distinct dimensions. A plausible explanation is a mismatch between that measurement model and broader conceptualizations of subjective well-being—which encompass both general and domain-specific satisfaction alongside positive affect [18]. In our sample, these facets were inseparable, and the two TSWQ dimensions collapsed into a single factor.

Regarding the statistical profile, descriptive results indicated moderate levels of subjective well-being: participants reported feeling effective, accomplished, and respected only "sometimes". This partially aligns with prior work reporting moderate well-being among teachers [59]. A plausible explanation is lower instructional self-efficacy. Notably, our participants scored at moderate levels on items tapping teaching efficacy (Q02, Q04, and Q08). Prior research on teacher well-being has consistently identified self-efficacy as a leading contributor to workplace well-being [51, 52]. When instructional efficacy is low and self-doubt is salient,

teachers may adopt more pessimistic views of students, devalue their influence on students' development, and rely on avoidant coping strategies in response to stressors [81]. Such dynamics are typically associated with reduced commitment to teaching and diminished classroom engagement, which in turn can erode positive job experiences and well-being. The finding is also unsurprising given the demanding nature of language teaching [1–3]. In the Chinese context, teachers commonly assume multiple roles—subject-matter expert, moral exemplar, and career guide—while contending with heightened public expectations. Ongoing reforms also place increasing demands on professional competencies (e.g., technology integration; ideological and cultural guidance). Collectively, these pressures elevate workload and may dampen well-being, consistent with Job Demands–Resources theory, which links high job demands to reduced workplace well-being [82].

Group comparisons indicated that teachers' subjective well-being varied by teaching experience and educational background. Early-career language teachers reported lower well-being, particularly on occupational efficacy, a finding consistent with previous studies. This pattern likely reflects a common dilemma facing novices: unfamiliar duties, perceived gaps in pedagogical knowledge and classroom management, and a mismatch between teaching ideals and institutional realities [21]. We also observed lower well-being among teachers with lower educational attainment. However, we refrain from drawing definitive conclusions about the role of education in career well-being. While higher degrees may be associated with higher income, prior work also documented that teachers with advanced qualifications could face heightened expectations and pressures to excel relative to those with lower qualifications [17]. Accordingly, the association between educational level and teacher well-being should be interpreted cautiously. By contrast, no significant differences emerged by gender, school type, or institutional location. Although such null results may indicate that contextual demands and available resources overshadow these demographic factors in the present sample, they warrant cautious interpretation given potential sampling and power considerations. For instance, prior research reported greater depression proneness among female teachers attributable to work–family conflict [21]. The absence of gender differences here may reflect sample composition, unmeasured resources (e.g., social support), or restricted variance in outcomes.

Finally, our ecological model highlights that subjective well-being, though experienced and evaluated individually, is embedded in teachers' work ecologies. At the microsystem level, interactions with students, colleagues, and leaders shaped daily experiences of competence, recognition, and support. At the exosystem level, organizational policies—often formulated without direct teacher input—contributed to feelings of belonging and institutional respect. At the macrosystem level, national reforms and shifting educational priorities prompted practice adaptations that, in turn, reinforced professional identity and efficacy. This perspective underscores the importance of social networks and workplace resources in sustaining teacher well-being: consistent with previous findings of research on teachers' well-being [26, 48, 51, 68], teachers with stronger networks and accessible resources manage challenges more effectively and report higher well-being.

5. Conclusion

This study profiled the subjective well-being of language-teaching professionals in China. We combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the construct's internal structure, provide a statistical overview, and offer a comprehensive account of teachers' experiences through narratives of their working lives and significant events. Quantitatively, results supported a unidimensional structure of EFL teachers' subjective well-being. Items indexing esteem and institutional belonging, together with instructional efficacy (e.g., feeling successful and effective in imparting knowledge), loaded on a single factor. With respect to levels of well-being, teachers reported experiencing happiness at a moderate frequency. Drawing on an ecological perspective, we identified and classified contextual contributors to workplace well-being. At the microsystem level, interactions with students, colleagues, and school leaders were direct sources of happiness. At the exosystem level, supportive school policies fostered collegial collaboration, novice–senior mentorship, and teacher–leader support, thereby enhancing well-being. At the macrosystem level, policy changes within the broader sociocultural context prompted shifts in local practice and encouraged adoption of newly advocated pedagogies, supporting teachers' effectiveness and growth. Overall, the study advances understanding of this construct by clarifying its conceptual profile and proposing an ecological model of the contexts in which subjective well-being is experienced in Chinese secondary education. These insights may inform teacher development in China.

The implications of these findings can guide efforts to optimize language teachers' working lives and promote their professional development. In teacher education, assessment of and reflection on classroom practice should be emphasized as core skills that foster positive self-perceptions. Both pre-service and in-service teachers may benefit from routinely recognizing successes in prior lessons—for example, recalling moments when they sparked students' curiosity about sociocultural phenomena in English-speaking contexts and then aligned linguistic objectives with deeper exploration. At the institutional level, school leaders should cultivate a supportive ecology in which teacher–student rapport and collaboration and trust among staff can thrive. This might include regular opportunities for students to express gratitude and for leadership to acknowledge instructional achievements. Policies should respect teachers' basic rights and recognize them as contributors to social development—shaping well-rounded future citizens—rather than as mere employees. Pedagogical and instructional autonomy should likewise be supported.

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations. First, the sample was drawn from only a few regions in China, which may constrain generalizability; future work should broaden the sampling frame and recruit larger cohorts of language educators, including cross-national comparisons given variation in policy and socioeconomic contexts. Second, although we tested the internal structure with EFA and CFA, several items were removed to achieve acceptable fit; future research could employ more flexible structural approaches, such as exploratory structural equation modelling. Finally, while guided by ecological systems theory, our design did not capture temporal

change. Teachers' subjective experiences likely fluctuate over time with shifts in curricula, social events, and policy; longitudinal designs are needed to trace these dynamics.

Author contributions: Conceptualization, HL and BC; methodology, HL and BC; formal analysis and investigation, HL and BC; writing—original draft preparation, BC; writing—review and editing, BC; supervision, HL. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: The authors received no financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article.

Institutional review board statement: All methods were carried out in accordance with the guidelines and regulations of the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments. Since this study does not involve intervention and it is low risk, ethical review and approval were waived according to the institutional review boards.

Informed consent statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data availability statement: The data used in this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Acknowledgment: The authors would like to thank all of the teachers who volunteered to participate in this study.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

1. Hiver P, Dörnyei Z. Language teacher immunity: A double-edged sword. Applied Linguistics. 2017; 38(3): 405–423.
2. Mercer S. The wellbeing of language teachers in the private sector: An ecological perspective. Language Teaching Research. 2020; 27(5): 1054–1077. doi: 10.1177/1362168820973510
3. Chu W, Liu H, Fang F. A tale of three excellent Chinese EFL teachers: Unpacking teacher professional qualities for their sustainable career trajectories from an ecological perspective. Sustainability. 2021; 13(12): 6721. doi: 10.3390/su13126721
4. Fan L, Ma F, Liu Y, et al. Risk factors and resilience strategies: Voices from Chinese novice foreign language teachers. Frontiers in Education. 2021; 5: 565722. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.565722
5. Gao X, Xu H. The dilemma of being English language teachers: Interpreting teachers' motivation to teach, and professional commitment in China's hinterland regions. Language Teaching Research. 2014; 18(2): 152–168. doi: 10.1177/1362168813505938
6. Yuan R, Zhang LJ. Exploring student teachers' motivation change in initial teacher education: A Chinese perspective. Teaching and Teacher Education. 2017; 61: 142–152. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2016.10.010
7. Chang ML. An appraisal perspective of teacher burnout: Examining the emotional work of teachers. Educational Psychology Review. 2009; 21(3): 193–218. doi: 10.1007/s10648-009-9106-y
8. Nazari M, Nejadghanbar H, Hu G. Emotion labor and professional identity construction of TESOL teacher educators. System. 2023; 117: 103111. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2023.103111
9. Zhang Q, Zhang J. Instructors' positive emotions: Effects on student engagement and critical thinking in U.S. and Chinese classrooms. Communication Education. 2013; 62(4): 395–411. doi: 10.1080/03634523.2013.828842
10. Cai Y, Liu H. Language teacher emotional intelligence: A scoping review. Forum for Education Studies. 2024; 2(4): 1599. doi: 10.59400/fes.v2i4.1599
11. Gu Q, Li Q. Sustaining resilience in times of change: Stories from Chinese teachers. Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher

Education. 2013; 41(3): 288–303. doi: 10.1080/1359866X.2013.809056
12. Li Q, Gu Q, He W. Resilience of Chinese teachers: Why perceived work conditions and relational trust matter. Measurement: Interdisciplinary Research and Perspectives. 2019; 17(3): 143–159. doi: 10.1080/15366367.2019.1588593
13. Liu B, Liu H. Exploring EFL teachers' emotional intelligence: A mixed-methods approach. Advances in Developmental and Educational Psychology. 2025; 5(1): 196–205. doi: 10.25082/ADEP.2024.01.003
14. Cuervo H, Vera-Toscano E. Teacher retention and attrition: Understanding why teachers leave and their post-teaching pathways in Australia. Asia Pacific Journal of Education. 2025. doi: 10.1080/02188791.2025.2473356
15. Nwoko JC, Emeto TI, Malau-Aduli AEO, et al. A systematic review of the factors that influence teachers' occupational wellbeing. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 2023; 20(12): 6070. doi: 10.3390/ijerph20126070
16. Stark K, Daulat N. Teacher well-being and teacher retention: Establishing a link. Social Psychology of Education. 2025; 28: 147. doi: 10.1007/s11218-025-10109-6
17. Owusu D, Arthur F, Nkyi AK, et al. Profiling differences in burnout among senior high school teachers in Ghana based on their demographic characteristics. International Journal of Changes in Education. 2023; 1(2): 86–96. doi: 10.47852/bonviewIJCE32021809
18. Carr A. Positive Psychology: The Science of Wellbeing and Human Strengths, 3rd ed. Routledge; 2022. doi: 10.4324/9781003082866
19. El Aadmi-Laamech K, Santos P, Hernández-Leo D. Impact of basic psychological needs fulfillment on teachers' well-being in Online Communities: Designing for well-being. Computers in Human Behavior Reports. 2025; 19: 100706. doi: 10.1016/j.chbr.2025.100706
20. Mercer S, Gregersen T. Teacher Wellbeing. Oxford University Press; 2020.
21. Sulis G, Mercer S, Babic S, Mairitsch A. Language Teacher Wellbeing across the Career Span. Multilingual Matters; 2023. doi: 10.21832/9781800412811
22. Devaki N, Parveen MSR, Priyanka M, et al. A vibrant ray of hope: Staff well being is key to students well being. Shanlax International Journal of Education. 2019; 7(3): 34–40. doi: 10.34293/education.v7i3.459
23. Roffey S. Pupil wellbeing—Teacher wellbeing: Two sides of the same coin? Educational and Child Psychology. 2012; 29(4): 8–17. doi: 10.53841/bpsecp.2012.29.4.8
24. Dewberry C, Briner R. Staff Well-Being Is Key to School Success. Available online: https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/5902birkbeckwbperfsummaryfinal.pdf (accessed on 1 August 2025).
25. Grenville-Cleave B, Boniwell I. Surviving or thriving? Do teachers have lower perceived control and well-being than other professions? Management in Education. 2012; 26(1): 3–5. doi: 10.1177/0892020611429252
26. Sak M. Language teacher educator wellbeing in online classes: An analytic autoethnography. European Journal of Education. 2025; 60(2): e70102. doi: 10.1111/ejed.70102
27. Fabian M. A Theory of Subjective Wellbeing. Oxford University Press; 2022.
28. Ryan RM, Deci EL. On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Annual Review of Psychology. 2001; 52: 141–166. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.141
29. Waterman AS. Two conceptions of happiness: Contrasts of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 1993; 64(4): 678–691. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.64.4.678
30. Chan DW. Subjective well-being of Hong Kong Chinese teachers: The contribution of gratitude, forgiveness, and the orientations to happiness. Teaching and Teacher Education. 2013; 32: 22–30. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2012.12.005
31. Csikszentmihalyi M. Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience. Harper Collins; 1990.
32. Dodge R, Daly AP, Huyton J, et al. The challenge of defining wellbeing. International Journal of Wellbeing. 2012; 2(3): 222–235. doi: 10.5502/ijw.v2i3.4
33. Thomas J. Working Paper: Current Measures and the Challenges of Measuring Children's Wellbeing. Office for National Statistics; 2009. Available online: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120106154926/http:/www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/user-guidance/well-being/wellbeing-knowledge-bank/child-wellbeing/working-paper--current-measures-and-the-challenges-of-measuring-children-s-wellbeing.pdf
34. Fisher CD. Conceptualizing and measuring wellbeing at work. In: Chen PY, Cooper CL (editors). Work and Wellbeing: A Complete Reference Guide. Wiley Blackwell; 2014. 3, pp. 9–33.
35. Seligman MEP. Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being. Free Press; 2011.
36. Oxford RL. Toward a psychology of well-being for language learners: The "EMPATHICS" vision. In: MacIntyre PD, Gregersen T, Mercer S (editors). Positive Psychology in SLA. Multilingual Matters; 2016. pp. 10–88. doi:

10.21832/9781783095360-003
37. Squires V, Walker K, Spurr S. Understanding self perceptions of wellbeing and resilience of preservice teachers. Teaching and Teacher Education. 2022; 118: 103828. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2022.103828
38. McCallum F. Teacher and staff wellbeing: Understanding the experiences of school staff. In: Kern ML, Wehmeyer ML (editors). The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Education. Palgrave Macmillan; 2021. pp. 715–740. doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-64537-3_28
39. Das KV, Jones-Harrell C, Fan Y, et al. Understanding subjective well-being: Perspectives from psychology and public health. Public Health Reviews. 2020; 41: 25. doi: 10.1186/s40985-020-00142-5
40. Diener E, Lucas RE, Oishi S. Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and life satisfaction. In: Snyder CR, Lopez SJ (editors). Handbook of Positive Psychology, 2nd ed. Oxford University Press; 2005. pp. 63–73. doi: 10.1093/oso/9780195135336.003.0005
41. Diener E, Ryan K. Subjective well-being: A general overview. South Africa Journal of Psychology. 2009; 39(4): 391–406. doi: 10.1177/008124630903900402
42. Chamani S, Safaeizadeh F, Xodabande I. Investigating the relationship between language teachers' occupational self-efficacy, satisfaction and meaning at work, and their subjective well-being. Frontiers in Psychology. 2023; 14: 1219130. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1219130
43. Diener E, Lucas RE, Oishi S. Advances and open questions in the science of subjective well-being. Collabra: Psychology. 2018; 4(1): 15. doi: 10.1525/collabra.115
44. Hone LC, Jarden A, Schofield GM, et al. Measuring flourishing: The impact of operational definitions on the prevalence of high levels of wellbeing. International Journal of Wellbeing. 2014; 4(1): 62–90. doi: 10.5502/ijw.v4i1.4
45. Huppert FA, Marks N, Clark A, et al. Measuring well-being across Europe: Description of the ESS well-being module and preliminary findings. Social Indicators Research. 2009; 91: 301–315. doi: 10.1007/s11205-008-9346-0
46. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-Being. OECD Publishing; 2013.
47. Bullough R, Hall-Kenyon K. Preschool Teachers' Lives and Work: Stories and Studies from the Field. Routledge; 2018. doi: 10.4324/9781315112718
48. Reitbauer M, Fürstenberg U, Kletzenbauer P, et al. Teaching is therapy for me. The subjective wellbeing of Austrian ICLHE teachers: Learning to balance challenges and resources through teacher development. Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching. 2022; 16(4–5): 366–380. doi: 10.1080/17501229.2022.2064468
49. Song H, Gu Q, Zhang Z. An exploratory study of teachers' subjective wellbeing: Understanding the links between teachers' income satisfaction, altruism, self-efficacy and work satisfaction. Teachers and Teaching. 2020; 26(1): 3–31. doi: 10.1080/13540602.2020.1719059
50. Henne D, Locke EA. Job dissatisfaction: What are the consequences? International Journal of Psychology. 1985; 20(2): 221–240. doi: 10.1080/00207598508247734
51. Ortan F, Simut C, Simut R. Self-efficacy, job satisfaction and teacher well-being in the K-12 educational system. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 2021; 18(23): 12763. doi: 10.3390/ijerph182312763
52. Shin DC, Johnson DM. Avowed happiness as an overall assessment of the quality of life. Social Indicators Research. 1978; 5: 475–492. doi: 10.1007/BF00352944
53. Proctor C. Subjective well-being (SWB). In: Michalos AC (editor). Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research. Springer; 2014. pp. 6437–6441. doi: 10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_2905
54. Pekrun R, Perry RP. Control-value theory of achievement emotions. In: Pekrun R, Linnenbrink-Garcia L (editors). International Handbook of Emotions in Education. Routledge; 2014. pp. 130–151.
55. Falecki D, Mann E. Practical applications for building teacher wellbeing in education. In: Mansfield CF (editor). Cultivating Teacher Resilience. Springer; 2021. pp. 175–191. doi: 10.1007/978-981-15-5963-1_11
56. Shin S, Mercer S, Babic S, et al. Riding the happiness curve: The wellbeing of mid-career phase language teachers. Language Learning Journal. 2021; 51(2): 195–207. doi: 10.1080/09571736.2021.1979632
57. Zee M, Koomen HMY. Teacher self-efficacy and its effects on classroom processes, student academic adjustment, and teacher well-being: A synthesis of 40 years of research. Review of Educational Research. 2016; 86(4): 981–1015. doi: 10.3102/0034654315626801
58. Seligman M. PERMA and the building blocks of well-being. The Journal of Positive Psychology. 2018; 13(4): 333–335. doi: 10.1080/17439760.2018.1437466

59. Schopes K, Lacomba-Trejo L, Valero-Moreno S, et al. The impact of resilience and subjective well-being on teacher burnout during COVID-19 in Chile. Psicología Educativa. 2023; 29(2): 167–175. doi: https://doi.org/10.5093/psed2023a12
60. Jimerson SR, Haddock AD. Understanding the importance of teachers in facilitating student success: Contemporary science, practice, and policy. School Psychology Quarterly. 2015; 30(4): 488–493. doi: 10.1037/spq0000134
61. Mameli C, Biolcati R, Passini S, et al. School context and subjective distress: The influence of teacher justice and school-specific well-being on adolescents' psychological health. School Psychology International. 2018; 39(5): 526–542. doi: 10.1177/0143034318794226
62. Diener E, Suh EM, Lucas RE, et al. Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. Psychological Bulletin. 1999; 125(2): 276–302. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.125.2.276
63. Rinas R, Dresel M, Daumiller M. Faculty subjective well-being: An achievement goal approach. International Journal of Educational Research. 2022; 115: 101942. doi: 10.1016/j.ijer.2022.101942
64. Yıldırım K. Main factors of teachers' professional well-being. Educational Research and Reviews. 2014; 9(6): 153–163.
65. Renshaw TL, Long ACJ, Cook CR. Assessing teachers' positive psychological functioning at work: Development and validation of the teacher subjective wellbeing questionnaire. School Psychology Quarterly. 2015; 30(2): 289–306. doi: 10.1037/spq0000112
66. Babic S, Mercer S, Mairitsch A, et al. Language teacher wellbeing in the workplace. Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition. 2022; 8(1): 11–34. doi: 10.31261/TAPSLA.11514
67. Blazek T, Morrison HJ, Sulz LD, et al. Prioritising teachers' health: The impact of 'unstructured wellness time' on educator wellness. Health Education Journal. 2025; 84(7). doi: 10.1177/00178969251332470
68. Börü N, Apaydın Ç, Yalçın OM, et al. The effect of collectivist culture on teachers' wellbeing: Mediating role of social justice leadership. International Journal of Educational Management. 2025; 39(4): 898–915. doi: 10.1108/IJEM-10-2024-0642
69. Mercer S. An agenda for well-being in ELT: An ecological perspective. ELT Journal. 2021; 75(1): 14–21. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccaa062
70. La Placa V, McNaught A, Knight A. Discourse on wellbeing in research and practice. International Journal of Wellbeing. 2013; 3(1): 116–125.
71. Liu L, Liu P, Yang H, et al. The relationship between distributed leadership and teacher well-being: The mediating roles of organisational trust. Educational Management Administration and Leadership. 2022; 52(4): 837–853. doi: 10.1177/17411432221113683
72. Jeliseh MT, Valizadeh M, Zohrabi M, et al. Enhancing language teachers' well-being through positive psychology interventions: A mixed-methods study focusing on gratitude journaling. Psychology in the Schools. 2025; 62(10): 4276–4292. doi: 10.1002/pits.70005
73. Dörnyei Z. Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methodologies. Oxford University Press; 2007.
74. Rose H, McKinley J, Baffoe-Djan JB. Data Collection Research Methods in Applied Linguistics. Bloomsbury Academic; 2019. doi: 10.5040/9781350025875
75. Bronfenbrenner U (Ed.). Making Human Beings Human: Bioecological Perspectives on Human Development. Sage Publications Ltd; 2005.
76. Bryman A, Cramer D. Quantitative Data Analysis with SPSS Release 8 for Windows: A Guide for Social Scientists. Routledge; 1999. doi: 10.4324/9780203459621
77. Field A. Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics, 4th ed. Sage Publications Ltd; 2013.
78. Hair Jr. JF, Black WC, Babin BJ, Anderson RE. Multivariate Data Analysis, 8th ed. Cengage Learning, EMEA; 2019.
79. Green S, Salkind N. Using SPSS for Windows and Macintosh: Analyzing and Understanding Data, 8th ed. Pearson; 2017.
80. Plonsky L, Gonulal T. Methodological synthesis in quantitative L2 research: A review of reviews and a case study of exploratory factor analysis. Language Learning. 2015; 65(S1): 9–36. doi: 10.1111/lang.12111
81. Bandura A. Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control. W. H. Freeman; 1997.
82. Bakker AB, Demerouti E, Sanz-Vergel A. Job demands-resources theory: Ten years later. Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior. 2023; 10: 25–53. doi: 10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-120920-053933