

HOW DO TEACHERS COPE WITH STRESS AND BURNOUT?

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**Exploring Teacher Well-Being, Resilience and Sustainable
Teaching Practices**

A Research Thesis

Submitted by

Karishma N. Pajnigara

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the research thesis entitled **“How Do Teachers Cope with Stress and Burnout? Exploring Teacher Well-Being, Resilience and Sustainable Teaching Practices”** has been prepared and presented by **Karishma N. Pajnigara** as an original research work.

The thesis examines teacher stress and burnout with particular attention to teacher well-being, resilience, coping strategies, organizational support, work-life balance and sustainable teaching practices. The work demonstrates an academic engagement with relevant theoretical perspectives and empirical literature concerning the psychological and professional experiences of teachers.

The research presented in this thesis has been undertaken for academic purposes and reflects the candidate's engagement with the subject matter and relevant scholarly literature.

Candidate:

Karishma N. Pajnigara

DECLARATION

I, **Karishma N. Pajnigara**, hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**How Do Teachers Cope with Stress and Burnout? Exploring Teacher Well-Being, Resilience and Sustainable Teaching Practices**” represents my original academic work.

I confirm that the research and writing presented in this thesis have been undertaken for academic purposes and that appropriate acknowledgement has been provided for ideas, arguments, evidence and information obtained from published and other scholarly sources.

I further declare that the work presented in this thesis has not knowingly been copied from another person's work and that sources used in developing the study have been appropriately acknowledged in accordance with accepted academic standards.

I accept responsibility for the academic integrity and originality of the work presented in this thesis.

Name: Karishma N. Pajnigara

ABSTRACT

Teacher stress and burnout have become important concerns within contemporary education because of their potential implications for teachers' psychological well-being, professional functioning and the long-term sustainability of the teaching profession. Teachers operate within increasingly complex professional environments in which instructional responsibilities are accompanied by administrative work, assessment, classroom management, communication with students and parents, accountability expectations and the need to respond to diverse learner needs. When such demands become persistent and are not adequately balanced by appropriate personal, professional and organizational resources, teachers may experience occupational stress and burnout.

This study examines how teachers experience and cope with occupational stress and burnout, with particular emphasis on teacher well-being, resilience, coping strategies and sustainable teaching practices. The study adopts a multidimensional perspective in which teacher stress and burnout are considered in relation to both individual resources and organizational conditions. Particular attention is given to the roles of resilience, self-efficacy, coping strategies, organizational support, collegial relationships, professional autonomy and work-life balance in shaping teachers' ability to manage occupational demands and maintain sustainable professional functioning.

The study is primarily informed by the Job Demands–Resources model, which provides a framework for examining the relationship between occupational demands and the resources available to teachers. Complementary perspectives concerning resilience and coping are considered to develop a broader understanding of how teachers respond to demanding professional circumstances. This approach enables the study to move beyond an exclusively individual explanation of burnout and consider the interaction between personal, interpersonal and organizational factors.

The literature reviewed in the study indicates that teacher stress and burnout are influenced by multiple and interconnected factors, including workload, administrative responsibilities, classroom management, emotional demands, accountability pressures and work-life imbalance. At the same time, personal and organizational resources, including resilience, self-efficacy, social support, leadership, autonomy and opportunities for recovery, may contribute to teachers' capacity to maintain well-being. Sustainable teaching is consequently considered as professional practice that enables teachers to maintain effectiveness and engagement while protecting their long-term well-being.

The study contributes to the existing literature by bringing together teacher stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping, organizational support and sustainable teaching within an integrated research framework. It also provides a basis for developing evidence-informed recommendations for supporting teachers and creating professional environments in which individual resources are supported by manageable occupational demands, appropriate organizational resources and sustainable working conditions.

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CHAPTER 1 — INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Teaching is a profession characterized by sustained intellectual, interpersonal and emotional demands. Teachers are expected to facilitate learning, assess student progress, manage classroom behavior, respond to diverse educational needs, communicate with parents and colleagues, comply with institutional requirements, and continually adapt to changes in curricula, technology and educational policy. These responsibilities extend beyond the formal hours spent in the classroom and can involve lesson preparation, assessment, documentation, meetings, professional development and other forms of administrative work. Consequently, the experience of being a teacher cannot be understood solely in terms of classroom instruction; it also involves a broader occupational environment that can either support or constrain teachers' ability to function effectively and maintain their well-being.

The increasing attention given to teacher well-being reflects recognition that teachers' working conditions have implications not only for educators themselves but also for schools and students. The OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2024 provides recent international evidence of the pressures associated with teaching. Across participating OECD education systems, approximately 19% of lower-secondary teachers reported experiencing a lot of stress in their work. However, the figure varies considerably between education systems, demonstrating that teacher stress is not experienced uniformly across educational contexts. In some systems, more than 30% of teachers reported experiencing a lot of work-related stress, whereas in others the proportion was below 5%.

The sources of this stress are similarly diverse. TALIS 2024 indicates that approximately 52% of teachers, on average across OECD education systems, identify general administrative work as a source of work-related stress. This includes activities such as paperwork, school-management tasks, attendance records and other clerical responsibilities that are not directly related to classroom instruction. Importantly, the relationship between administrative work and teacher stress does not appear to depend solely on the number of hours spent on such activities. The OECD reports considerable differences between education systems in the proportion of teachers identifying administrative work as stressful even where reported time spent on these tasks is relatively similar. This suggests that the nature, organization and perceived usefulness of administrative responsibilities may be as important as their volume.

Teacher stress is therefore better understood as a multidimensional occupational phenomenon. Workload is one element, but teachers may also experience pressure arising from classroom discipline, adapting teaching to students with different needs, accountability requirements, educational reforms and interactions with parents. TALIS 2024 identifies classroom discipline and adapting teaching to diverse student needs among the important demands associated with teacher well-being. The survey further indicates that teachers' perceptions of these demands differ according to their professional experience and confidence in managing teaching and classroom situations.

Within this context, an important distinction must be made between **stress and burnout**. Stress can refer to a response to demanding circumstances and may occur temporarily or periodically within professional life. Burnout, by contrast, concerns a more persistent occupational condition associated with chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. The World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision (ICD-11), conceptualizes burnout as an occupational phenomenon characterized by three dimensions: feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, increased mental distance from one's job or feelings of negativity or cynicism toward it, and reduced professional efficacy. The WHO also makes clear that burnout is not classified as a medical condition within ICD-11.

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This distinction is particularly relevant in the context of education. Teachers may experience periods of intense workload without necessarily developing burnout. Similarly, a teacher may remain highly committed to teaching while experiencing substantial occupational pressure. Consequently, teacher stress, burnout, job satisfaction and overall well-being should not be treated as interchangeable concepts. Understanding their relationships requires consideration of both the demands placed upon teachers and the resources available to them.

Teacher well-being has consequently emerged as an important area of educational research. A systematic review by Hascher and Waber examined 98 peer-reviewed studies published between 2000 and 2019 and found considerable variation in how teacher well-being was conceptualized and investigated. The review highlighted the importance of social relationships and argued for more precise, domain-specific approaches to understanding teacher well-being. It also identified a need for greater attention to the outcomes of teacher well-being and to the relationship between predictors and interventions.

This broader understanding of well-being is central to the present study. Teacher well-being should not simply be defined as the absence of stress or burnout. It encompasses teachers' ability to function effectively within their professional environment, maintain positive relationships, experience a sense of professional efficacy, preserve motivation and maintain sufficient psychological and personal resources to meet occupational demands. In this respect, well-being is connected to the sustainability of the teaching profession itself.

The question of sustainability introduces another important dimension of the present research. Teachers do not respond identically to similar occupational pressures. Some may rely on social support, planning, problem-solving, professional collaboration or other coping mechanisms, while others may experience greater difficulty recovering from demanding periods. Research on teacher resilience similarly emphasizes that resilience should not be interpreted simply as an individual's ability to tolerate excessive pressure. A recent systematic review of 54 studies examined teacher resilience through the Job Demands–Resources framework and identified both demands and resources as important in understanding how resilience develops and operates within teachers' professional environments.

Accordingly, the present study approaches teacher stress and burnout through an integrated perspective. Rather than asking only whether teachers experience stress, it examines **how teachers cope with stress, how resilience relates to burnout, how teacher well-being is affected, and what sustainable teaching practices may help teachers maintain their professional functioning over time**. The study also recognizes that coping cannot be considered exclusively an individual responsibility. School leadership, organizational support, collegial relationships, workload arrangements and the wider educational environment may influence teachers' capacity to manage occupational demands.

The central concern of this thesis is therefore not simply the existence of teacher stress and burnout, but the conditions under which teachers are able to remain healthy, resilient and professionally engaged despite the demands of teaching. By bringing together teacher stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping and sustainable teaching practices, the study seeks to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers can sustain their professional lives in demanding educational environments.

1.2 Background of the Study

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The teaching profession occupies a distinctive position within society because teachers perform both instructional and relational functions. Their responsibilities extend beyond transferring knowledge to students. Teachers are expected to create supportive learning environments, identify individual learning needs, manage classroom interactions, evaluate student performance and respond to the social and emotional dimensions of students' development. These expectations occur within institutional structures that impose additional requirements relating to curriculum implementation, assessment, reporting, professional standards and accountability.

As education systems have become increasingly complex, the nature of teachers' work has consequently expanded. Contemporary teachers may be required to integrate digital technologies, accommodate increasingly diverse classrooms, respond to changing curriculum requirements and participate in administrative processes while maintaining instructional quality. Such changes can create opportunities for professional development, but they can also introduce additional demands when teachers lack sufficient time, resources, autonomy or institutional support.

The OECD TALIS 2024 findings illustrate the scale and complexity of these demands. Approximately one in five lower-secondary teachers across participating OECD education systems reported experiencing a lot of stress at work. At the same time, only a relatively small proportion of teachers reported that their work leaves them a lot of time for their personal lives. On average, 11% of teachers indicated that their work leaves them a lot of time for their personal lives, although substantial variation exists between education systems.

The relationship between workload and well-being is particularly important. Teachers spend considerable time on activities beyond direct instruction, including preparation, assessment, administration and communication. TALIS 2024 reports that teachers spend the greatest amount of their working time on teaching and lesson preparation, but its analysis suggests that not all additional work has the same relationship with well-being. Additional time spent on administrative tasks, marking and communication with parents is associated with a steeper decline in the teacher well-being measure than comparable increases in time spent on teaching or lesson preparation.

This finding has important implications for understanding **teaching workload**. Workload cannot be adequately represented by the number of hours teachers spend at school. Two teachers may work the same number of hours but experience those hours differently depending on whether they are devoted to meaningful instructional activities, professional collaboration, administrative compliance or tasks perceived as interfering with core teaching responsibilities. TALIS 2024 similarly observes that administrative workload can be perceived as stressful even where the amount of time spent on administrative activities is relatively limited, suggesting that the organization and nature of work matter alongside its quantity.

Classroom demands represent another important component of teacher stress. Teachers regularly encounter differences in student behavior, learning needs, language, ability and social background. TALIS 2024 reports that adapting teaching to diverse needs and maintaining classroom discipline are important sources of stress. The findings further suggest that the nature of diversity matters: teachers are more likely to identify classroom discipline as stressful when diversity involves behavioral, linguistic or special educational needs rather than simply differences in academic achievement.

The experience of classroom demands is also related to teachers' professional confidence. TALIS 2024 reports that, in 34 of the 54 education systems with available data, teachers with higher instructional self-efficacy were less likely to report classroom discipline as a source of stress. In several systems, the difference between teachers with higher and lower levels of self-efficacy exceeded 18 percentage points. This suggests that teachers' personal resources may influence how occupational demands are experienced, while also reinforcing the importance of adequate professional preparation and organizational support.

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Another relevant issue is the relationship between teacher stress and work-life balance. Teaching responsibilities can extend beyond formal working hours through lesson preparation, marking, communication and planning. When professional responsibilities consistently occupy evenings or weekends, opportunities for psychological recovery may become constrained. TALIS 2024's finding that only 11% of teachers, on average, report that their work leaves them a lot of time for personal life highlights the importance of examining work-life balance as part of teacher well-being rather than treating it as an unrelated personal issue.

The consequences of persistent occupational stress extend beyond temporary fatigue. When stress becomes chronic and is not successfully managed, it may be associated with patterns of exhaustion, psychological distancing and reduced professional efficacy that correspond with the WHO's conceptualization of burnout. For teachers, such experiences may influence their engagement with students, perceptions of professional effectiveness, job satisfaction and intention to remain in the profession. This makes teacher burnout relevant not only as an individual well-being issue but also as an organizational and educational concern.

However, the relationship between teacher stress and well-being is not exclusively negative or deterministic. Teachers possess different personal and professional resources that can influence their responses to challenging working conditions. Resilience is one such resource. Contemporary research increasingly views teacher resilience within the interaction between job demands and job resources rather than as a fixed personal characteristic. The systematic review by Lu and colleagues, which examined 54 studies on teacher resilience using the Job Demands–Resources framework, demonstrates the growing importance of understanding resilience through this interaction.

Coping strategies constitute another important dimension. Teachers may respond to occupational demands through planning and problem-solving, seeking support from colleagues, reframing difficult experiences, regulating emotions or modifying their working practices. These strategies may help teachers manage specific demands, but their effectiveness can depend on the context in which they are used. An individual coping strategy cannot fully compensate for excessive workload, inadequate staffing or persistent organizational problems. Consequently, the study of coping must be situated within the broader environment in which teachers work.

Social and organizational relationships are particularly important in this regard. The systematic review by Hascher and Waber identified social relationships as a pivotal factor in teacher well-being. Supportive relationships with colleagues and school leaders can provide emotional assistance, practical advice and opportunities to share professional responsibilities. Conversely, limited support or poor organizational communication may intensify teachers' perceptions of occupational demands.

This leads to the concept of **sustainable teaching practices**. Sustainability in teaching should not be interpreted simply as teaching for a long period of time. It concerns the ability to maintain effective professional practice without requiring teachers to continuously deplete their psychological, emotional and physical resources. Sustainable teaching may therefore involve reasonable workload management, collaborative planning, effective classroom routines, appropriate professional boundaries, reflective practice, recovery opportunities and organizational arrangements that support rather than undermine teacher well-being.

The significance of this perspective becomes clearer when teacher well-being is considered as a multidimensional construct. Hascher and Waber's systematic review demonstrated that teacher well-being has been investigated through different theoretical approaches and that the field lacks complete conceptual uniformity. Therefore, a study examining teacher well-being should avoid reducing it to a single score or treating it simply as the opposite of burnout.

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Instead, the present research conceptualizes teacher well-being as part of a broader system involving occupational demands, personal resources, social relationships and professional practices. Within this system, stress and burnout represent potential consequences of sustained demands, while resilience, coping, organizational support and sustainable practices may provide resources that help teachers manage those demands.

The background to this study therefore rests on an important shift in perspective. The question is no longer simply whether teachers experience stress. Current research establishes that teachers in many educational systems do experience substantial occupational demands. The more important research question concerns **why some teachers are able to maintain well-being and professional engagement under demanding circumstances, while others experience greater difficulties with stress and burnout.**

Understanding this variation is essential for developing meaningful interventions. If teacher burnout is approached only as an individual problem, responses may focus narrowly on stress-management workshops or resilience training. Such approaches may be useful, but they risk overlooking organizational conditions that contribute to stress. Conversely, focusing exclusively on institutional conditions may overlook the personal resources, coping mechanisms and professional practices that influence teachers' experiences.

The present study therefore adopts a broader perspective that considers both dimensions. It examines the relationship between teachers' occupational demands and their experiences of stress and burnout while also investigating the potential protective roles of resilience, coping, organizational support and sustainable teaching practices. In doing so, the study seeks to contribute to a more balanced understanding of teacher well-being—one that recognizes both individual agency and the responsibility of educational organizations to create sustainable working environments.

1.3 Problem Statement

Teacher stress and burnout have become important concerns within contemporary education because teachers operate in work environments characterized by multiple and sometimes competing demands. Although teaching is widely regarded as a profession with substantial social value, teachers are required to manage instructional responsibilities alongside administrative work, assessment, classroom discipline, communication with parents, curriculum changes and increasingly diverse student needs. The accumulation of these responsibilities can create conditions in which teachers have limited opportunities for recovery and may experience sustained occupational pressure.

Recent international evidence confirms that teacher stress is not an isolated or marginal issue. TALIS 2024 reports that approximately **19% of lower-secondary teachers across participating OECD education systems experience a lot of stress at work.** The proportion varies substantially across education systems, indicating that the problem is influenced by contextual and organizational conditions rather than being a uniform characteristic of the teaching profession.

Administrative workload represents a particularly important component of this problem. Approximately **52% of teachers**, on average across OECD education systems, identify general administrative work as a source of stress. TALIS 2024 further demonstrates that the relationship between administrative work and stress cannot be explained solely by the number of hours teachers spend on administration. In several education systems, relatively limited amounts of administrative work are nevertheless widely perceived as stressful. The OECD suggests that the nature of administrative activities, their interaction with other responsibilities and the extent to which they interfere with core teaching may influence teachers' perceptions of this work.

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The problem extends beyond administrative responsibilities. Teachers must respond to classroom discipline, diverse learning needs and changing educational expectations. TALIS 2024 identifies these demands as important components of teachers' working conditions and demonstrates that their effects differ according to teacher and school characteristics. This indicates that teacher stress is not adequately explained by a single factor such as workload. Instead, it emerges within a broader interaction between job demands, professional resources and organizational context.

A further concern is that persistent occupational stress may develop into burnout when it is not successfully managed. The WHO's ICD-11 conceptualizes burnout as an occupational phenomenon arising from chronic workplace stress and characterized by exhaustion, increased mental distance or cynicism toward one's work, and reduced professional efficacy. The distinction between stress and burnout is therefore important to the research problem. While stress may represent a response to demanding circumstances, burnout reflects a more persistent pattern of occupational exhaustion and disengagement.

Despite growing research attention, important conceptual and practical questions remain. Existing literature has produced substantial knowledge about teacher stress, burnout and well-being, but these constructs have often been studied through separate research streams. Research on teacher well-being, for example, encompasses multiple definitions and theoretical approaches. Hascher and Waber's systematic review of 98 studies concluded that the field would benefit from more precise and domain-specific conceptualizations of teacher well-being and highlighted the importance of social relationships as predictors of well-being.

Similarly, resilience has increasingly been recognized as a potential protective resource, but resilience should not be treated as an individual capacity that operates independently of working conditions. The systematic review of 54 studies by Lu and colleagues demonstrates that teacher resilience can be examined through the Job Demands–Resources framework, emphasizing the relationship between the demands teachers encounter and the resources available to them. This creates a need for research that considers resilience alongside organizational and occupational factors rather than treating it as a personal solution to workplace stress.

A related problem concerns the treatment of coping. Teachers use different strategies to respond to occupational demands, but not all coping strategies address the underlying sources of stress. Individual strategies such as time management, emotional regulation, positive reframing and seeking social support may help teachers manage particular situations. However, when stress originates from persistent excessive workload, inadequate staffing, organizational uncertainty or limited autonomy, individual coping alone may not be sufficient. Consequently, research must distinguish between **how teachers cope with stress** and **whether the conditions producing stress are themselves sustainable**.

The concept of sustainable teaching practices therefore represents an important but comparatively underdeveloped dimension of the problem. Much of the discussion surrounding teacher burnout focuses on identifying stressors or measuring psychological outcomes. Less attention may be given to the everyday practices through which teachers attempt to maintain sustainable professional functioning. Understanding these practices could help move research beyond documenting the existence of burnout toward identifying ways in which teachers and educational organizations can support long-term professional well-being.

There is also a practical problem concerning the distribution of responsibility for teacher well-being. If burnout is presented primarily as a consequence of insufficient individual resilience, responsibility may implicitly be transferred from institutions to individual teachers. Such an approach risks overlooking the influence of workload structures, leadership practices, organizational support, professional autonomy and working conditions. At the same time, an exclusively organizational

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explanation would fail to account for differences in teachers' coping resources, resilience and perceptions of stressful situations. A comprehensive investigation must therefore examine **both individual and contextual dimensions**.

The problem addressed by this study can consequently be expressed as a gap between what is known about teacher stress and what is needed to understand sustainable professional functioning. Existing research establishes that teachers experience significant occupational demands and that stress and burnout are important concerns. However, a more integrated understanding is needed of how **teacher stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping strategies, organizational support and sustainable teaching practices interact within teachers' professional lives**.

This study responds to that problem by examining teachers' experiences of occupational stress and burnout while investigating the factors that may support their ability to cope and maintain well-being. Particular attention is given to resilience and coping as individual resources, organizational and social support as contextual resources, and sustainable teaching practices as mechanisms through which teachers may manage professional demands over time.

The central problem is therefore not simply that teachers experience stress. Rather, it is that **persistent occupational demands may threaten teacher well-being and contribute to burnout, while the mechanisms that enable teachers to cope, recover and sustain effective professional practice are not yet sufficiently integrated into a single research framework**.

Accordingly, the present study seeks to investigate how teachers experience and respond to stress and burnout, how resilience and coping are associated with their well-being, and how sustainable teaching practices may contribute to healthier and more sustainable professional lives. By examining these dimensions together, the study aims to provide evidence that can inform teachers, school leaders, teacher-education institutions and educational policymakers about approaches to supporting teacher well-being without placing the entire responsibility for managing occupational stress on individual educators.

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of this study is to investigate how teachers experience and cope with occupational stress and burnout, with particular attention to the roles of teacher well-being, resilience, coping strategies and sustainable teaching practices. The study seeks to develop an integrated understanding of the personal, professional and organizational factors that influence teachers' experiences of occupational stress and their ability to maintain psychological well-being and sustainable professional functioning. In doing so, the study moves beyond viewing teacher burnout solely as an individual problem and considers the interaction between occupational demands, personal resources and workplace conditions.

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. **To identify and examine the major occupational factors associated with teacher stress**, including workload, administrative responsibilities, classroom demands, accountability pressures and other workplace-related challenges.
2. **To examine teachers' experiences of burnout**, with particular attention to exhaustion, psychological distance or cynicism towards work, and perceptions of professional efficacy.
3. **To examine the relationship between occupational stress, burnout and teacher well-being**, considering how prolonged workplace demands may influence teachers' psychological and professional functioning.

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4. **To investigate the coping strategies used by teachers to manage occupational stress and burnout**, including individual, interpersonal and professional approaches to coping and recovery.
5. **To examine the role of teacher resilience in responding to occupational stress and burnout**, with particular consideration of resilience as a personal resource that may support adaptation and recovery.
6. **To investigate the influence of organizational and social support on teacher well-being**, including the potential contribution of leadership support, collegial relationships, professional autonomy and workplace resources.
7. **To examine sustainable teaching practices and their relationship with teacher well-being and burnout**, focusing on practices that may help teachers maintain their professional effectiveness while protecting their long-term well-being.
8. **To explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of the conditions that support or hinder sustainable professional practice**, including the interaction between individual coping resources and organizational working conditions.
9. **To examine whether resilience, coping strategies, organizational support and sustainable teaching practices are associated with differences in teachers' experiences of stress, burnout and well-being.**
10. **To develop evidence-informed recommendations for supporting teacher well-being and promoting sustainable teaching practices**, with implications for teachers, school leaders, educational organizations, teacher educators and policymakers.

Taken together, these objectives provide a framework for examining teacher stress and burnout as multidimensional phenomena. They enable the study to consider both the challenges teachers encounter and the resources and practices that may help them manage those challenges over time.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions are derived from the overall aim and objectives of the study and are designed to examine teacher stress and burnout from interconnected personal, professional and organizational perspectives. Rather than considering burnout as an isolated outcome, the questions examine how occupational demands interact with teacher well-being, resilience, coping resources, organizational support and sustainable teaching practices.

The main research question is:

How do teachers cope with occupational stress and burnout, and what role do teacher well-being, resilience and sustainable teaching practices play in supporting their long-term professional well-being?

To address the main research question, the study is guided by the following specific research questions:

RQ1. What are the major sources and forms of occupational stress experienced by teachers?

RQ2. How do teachers experience and describe the different dimensions of occupational burnout, including exhaustion, psychological distance or cynicism, and perceived professional efficacy?

RQ3. What relationship exists between occupational stress, teacher burnout and teacher well-being?

RQ4. What coping strategies do teachers use to manage occupational stress and experiences of burnout?

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RQ5. What role does teacher resilience play in helping teachers respond to occupational stress and maintain their professional well-being?

RQ6. How do organizational and social factors, including leadership support, collegial relationships, professional autonomy and workplace resources, influence teachers' experiences of stress, burnout and well-being?

RQ7. What sustainable teaching practices do teachers use to maintain their professional effectiveness while protecting their well-being?

RQ8. To what extent are resilience, coping strategies, organizational support and sustainable teaching practices associated with lower levels of burnout and more positive experiences of teacher well-being?

RQ9. How do teachers describe the personal, professional and organizational conditions that enable or hinder their ability to sustain a healthy and effective professional life?

RQ10. What measures can schools, educational organizations and other relevant stakeholders adopt to reduce occupational stress, support teacher well-being and promote sustainable teaching practices?

The research questions collectively establish the analytical direction of the study. They provide a basis for examining both the experiences of teachers and the broader conditions within which those experiences occur. This approach is particularly important because strategies for addressing teacher burnout cannot be understood adequately through individual coping alone; the professional environment, available resources and organizational conditions also influence teachers' capacity to sustain their well-being and engagement with teaching.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Teacher stress and burnout have implications that extend beyond individual teachers because teachers' well-being is closely connected with the quality and sustainability of educational work. Understanding how teachers experience occupational stress, how they cope with demanding circumstances and what enables them to remain professionally engaged is therefore important for individuals as well as schools, educational organizations, teacher education institutions and policymakers. The significance of the present study lies in its integrated examination of teacher well-being, resilience, coping and sustainable teaching practices rather than treating these dimensions as separate issues.

1.6.1 Significance to Teachers

The study is significant to teachers because it provides a framework for understanding the occupational pressures that may contribute to stress and burnout and the resources that may help teachers respond to those pressures. By examining coping strategies, resilience and sustainable teaching practices, the study may contribute to greater awareness of how teachers manage demanding professional circumstances while maintaining their well-being. The study also recognises that teachers' ability to cope is influenced by their working environment and therefore avoids placing responsibility for preventing burnout exclusively on individual teachers.

A better understanding of the relationship between occupational demands and well-being may help teachers identify patterns that affect their professional functioning, recovery and work-life balance. The findings may also provide a basis for encouraging sustainable approaches to workload management, professional boundaries, peer support and reflective practice. Such approaches are particularly relevant where teachers are expected to manage multiple instructional, administrative, interpersonal and emotional responsibilities simultaneously.

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1.6.2 Significance to School Leaders and Educational Organizations

The study has practical significance for school leaders and educational organizations because organizational conditions play an important role in shaping teachers' experiences of occupational stress. Leadership practices, workload allocation, communication, professional autonomy, collegial relationships, access to resources and recognition of teachers' contributions may influence the demands teachers experience and the resources available to them.

The findings may help educational organizations identify areas in which organizational practices can be strengthened to support teacher well-being. Rather than relying exclusively on individual stress-management programmes, the study may contribute to a broader understanding of how workplace structures and organizational resources can be used to reduce avoidable occupational pressures and create conditions that support sustainable professional practice.

1.6.3 Significance to Teacher Education and Professional Development

Teacher education and continuing professional development have traditionally focused substantially on instructional knowledge, pedagogical skills and subject expertise. However, the ability to manage the demands of the profession is also relevant to teachers' long-term sustainability within the occupation. The present study may contribute to teacher education by highlighting the importance of resilience, adaptive coping, emotional regulation, reflective practice and sustainable approaches to professional workload.

The findings may inform the development of professional learning programmes that prepare teachers not only to perform their instructional responsibilities effectively but also to recognize and respond constructively to occupational pressures. Such preparation may be particularly valuable for early-career teachers as they develop professional identities and learn to navigate the complex demands of teaching.

1.6.4 Significance to Educational Policymakers

The study may also provide useful evidence for policymakers concerned with teacher retention, working conditions and the sustainability of the teaching workforce. Teacher stress and burnout are not exclusively individual or school-level concerns; they may also reflect broader features of education systems, including workload expectations, accountability requirements, staffing conditions, administrative requirements and available professional resources.

By examining the interaction between these factors and teacher well-being, the study may provide evidence that can inform policies aimed at improving teachers' working environments. The findings may support a more comprehensive policy perspective in which teacher well-being is considered alongside instructional quality, workforce sustainability and educational effectiveness.

1.6.5 Significance to Students and Educational Outcomes

Although the primary focus of the study is teacher well-being, its significance extends to students because teachers operate at the centre of classroom learning environments. Teachers experiencing persistent occupational strain may face difficulties in maintaining the energy, engagement and professional resources required for effective teaching. Conversely, working conditions that support teacher well-being may contribute to teachers' capacity to remain engaged and responsive in their professional roles.

The study does not assume a simple or automatic causal relationship between teacher well-being and student outcomes. Rather, it recognises that teacher well-being forms part of the wider conditions

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within which teaching and learning take place. Understanding these conditions may therefore contribute indirectly to efforts to create supportive and sustainable educational environments for both teachers and students.

1.6.6 Significance to Researchers and Academic Knowledge

The study contributes to academic knowledge by bringing together several areas of research that are frequently examined independently, including teacher stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping and sustainable teaching practices. Existing research provides substantial evidence concerning individual aspects of these phenomena, but an integrated perspective can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how occupational demands and personal and organizational resources interact.

The study may therefore contribute conceptually by examining teacher well-being within a broader framework that incorporates both individual and contextual dimensions. It may also identify areas in which existing research remains inconsistent or insufficiently developed, particularly regarding the relationship between coping, resilience, organizational support and sustainable professional practice.

1.6.7 Significance for Sustainable Teaching Practice

A central significance of the study is its contribution to the concept of sustainable teaching. Sustainability in this context refers not simply to teachers remaining in employment but to their ability to maintain professional effectiveness, engagement and well-being over time without experiencing persistent levels of occupational strain that undermine their personal and professional functioning.

This perspective shifts attention from the question of how teachers can tolerate increasing levels of pressure towards a broader consideration of the conditions that allow teaching to remain a sustainable profession. It recognises the importance of individual resources such as resilience and coping while also acknowledging the role of organizational support, manageable demands, professional autonomy and healthy working conditions.

Overall, the study is significant because it approaches teacher stress and burnout as multidimensional professional issues requiring attention at several levels. Its findings may contribute to a more balanced understanding of the relationship between occupational demands and individual resources and may support the development of educational environments in which teachers are better able to maintain their well-being, professional effectiveness and long-term engagement with teaching.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The present study focuses on teachers' experiences of occupational stress and burnout and examines the factors that influence their ability to maintain well-being and sustainable professional functioning. The scope of the study encompasses five closely related areas: teacher stress and burnout, teacher well-being, resilience and coping, organizational and social support, and sustainable teaching practices. These areas are examined collectively because teachers' experiences of occupational strain cannot be adequately understood by considering individual psychological responses in isolation. Instead, stress and burnout may emerge through the interaction between professional demands, personal resources and the conditions within which teachers perform their work.

The study considers occupational stress in relation to the demands commonly associated with the teaching profession. These include workload, administrative responsibilities, lesson preparation, assessment and marking, classroom management, student-related challenges, accountability expectations, adapting instruction to diverse learner needs and difficulties in maintaining an appropriate balance between professional and personal responsibilities. The study is concerned not

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only with the presence of these demands but also with how teachers perceive and respond to them. This distinction is important because the same occupational demand may be experienced differently depending on teachers' available resources, professional circumstances and perceptions of control and support.

The scope of the study also includes teacher burnout as a distinct but related phenomenon. The investigation considers burnout through the dimensions of exhaustion, psychological distance or cynicism towards work, and reduced professional efficacy. This approach recognises that experiencing occupational stress does not necessarily mean that a teacher is experiencing burnout. Rather, the study examines how persistent or inadequately managed occupational demands may contribute to more sustained forms of professional strain and how these experiences relate to teachers' broader well-being.

Teacher well-being represents another central dimension of the study. The research considers well-being as a multidimensional concept encompassing teachers' psychological, emotional and professional experiences. Particular attention is given to teachers' perceptions of their ability to manage workplace demands, remain engaged with their professional responsibilities, maintain positive professional functioning and achieve an acceptable relationship between work and personal life. This broader understanding allows the study to consider well-being not merely as the absence of stress or burnout but as a positive condition associated with sustainable professional functioning.

The study further examines resilience and coping as important resources in teachers' responses to occupational demands. Resilience is considered in terms of teachers' capacity to adapt to challenging professional circumstances, recover from adversity and continue functioning effectively. Coping refers to the cognitive, emotional, behavioural and interpersonal strategies teachers use to manage or respond to stressful circumstances. However, the study does not conceptualise resilience as an expectation that teachers should simply tolerate excessive workloads or inadequate working conditions. Instead, resilience and coping are examined alongside organizational resources and working conditions, recognising that individual capacity is influenced by the environment in which professional activity occurs.

Organizational and social support also fall within the scope of the study. Attention is given to factors such as leadership support, collegial relationships, professional autonomy, access to appropriate resources, communication and opportunities for professional development. These factors are considered because workplace resources may influence teachers' ability to manage occupational demands and may either strengthen or constrain their capacity to maintain well-being. The study therefore adopts a broader perspective in which teacher well-being is understood as being influenced by both individual and organizational conditions.

Sustainable teaching practices constitute a further area of investigation. In this study, sustainable teaching refers to approaches to professional practice that enable teachers to maintain effectiveness, engagement and well-being over an extended period. Such practices may involve appropriate workload management, professional boundaries, collaboration, reflective practice, recovery and the effective use of available resources. Sustainability is therefore understood not simply as teachers remaining within the profession but as their capacity to continue teaching in a manner that does not systematically undermine their physical, psychological or professional well-being.

The study is primarily concerned with teachers' occupational and professional experiences and does not attempt to provide clinical diagnoses of mental-health conditions. Burnout is examined as an occupational phenomenon rather than as a clinical diagnosis, and the study does not seek to assess individual teachers' psychological fitness or medical status. Similarly, the study does not assume that one particular coping strategy, resilience characteristic or organizational intervention can

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independently explain teachers' experiences. Instead, it examines the interaction between multiple factors that may contribute to stress, burnout, well-being and sustainable professional practice.

The scope of the study is consequently bounded by its central focus on the relationship between occupational demands and the personal, professional and organizational resources available to teachers. This provides a foundation for investigating not only the factors that contribute to teacher stress and burnout but also the mechanisms and conditions through which teachers cope with occupational challenges and sustain their professional well-being. The study ultimately seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how teaching can remain a sustainable professional activity in the face of changing and often demanding workplace expectations.

1.8 Definitions of Key Terms

The following terms are central to the present study and are defined according to the way they are used within the research. Establishing clear definitions is important because concepts such as stress, burnout, well-being, resilience and coping are sometimes used interchangeably in general discussion despite representing distinct constructs within the academic literature.

Table 1.1. Definitions of Key Terms Used in the Study

Term	Definition within the context of the study
Teacher Stress	The psychological and professional strain experienced by teachers when perceived occupational demands exceed, or are difficult to manage with, the resources available to them.
Teacher Burnout	A work-related state associated with chronic occupational stress and characterised by exhaustion, increased psychological distance or cynicism towards work, and reduced professional efficacy.
Teacher Well-Being	A multidimensional state reflecting teachers' psychological, emotional and professional functioning, including their capacity to experience positive functioning and manage the demands of their professional roles.
Resilience	The capacity of teachers to adapt to challenging circumstances, recover from adversity and maintain or regain effective professional functioning.
Coping Strategies	The cognitive, emotional, behavioural and interpersonal approaches used by teachers to manage, respond to or adapt to stressful occupational circumstances.
Sustainable Teaching Practices	Professional practices and working approaches that enable teachers to maintain effectiveness, engagement and well-being over time without persistent occupational demands undermining their functioning.
Organizational Support	The practical, social and professional resources provided through the workplace, including leadership support, collegial relationships, autonomy, communication and access to relevant resources.
Work-Life Balance	The extent to which teachers are able to manage the demands of professional and personal life without persistent conflict between the two domains.
Occupational Demands	The physical, cognitive, emotional, interpersonal and organizational requirements associated with performing the teaching role.
Teacher Self-Efficacy	Teachers' beliefs regarding their capacity to organize and perform the actions required to accomplish specific teaching tasks and respond effectively to professional challenges.

Within this study, **teacher stress** is distinguished from **teacher burnout**. Stress refers broadly to the strain associated with occupational demands and the individual's response to those demands, whereas burnout represents a more specific work-related phenomenon associated with prolonged occupational

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stress. This distinction is important because teachers may experience periods of high stress without necessarily developing burnout.

The concept of **teacher well-being** is similarly broader than the absence of stress or burnout. A teacher may experience occupational challenges while still maintaining positive professional functioning, meaningful engagement and a satisfactory sense of well-being. Consequently, the present study considers well-being as a multidimensional construct that includes positive aspects of teachers' professional and psychological experiences as well as the potential effects of occupational strain.

Resilience and **coping** are also treated as related but distinct concepts. Resilience refers primarily to the capacity to adapt and recover in response to adversity, whereas coping concerns the strategies and processes used to manage specific stressful situations. Both are relevant to the present study because teachers may draw upon personal and interpersonal resources to respond to workplace demands, while the effectiveness of those resources may also depend on the organizational context in which teachers work.

Finally, **sustainable teaching practices** are understood as practices that support the continuation of effective professional activity while protecting teachers' long-term well-being. This definition is particularly important to the study because sustainability is not interpreted simply as teachers' ability to remain in employment. Rather, it concerns whether teachers can continue to perform their professional responsibilities effectively without persistent occupational demands progressively undermining their well-being, motivation and professional functioning.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter established the foundation for the study by introducing the issue of teacher stress and burnout and positioning it within the broader context of teacher well-being, resilience, coping and sustainable professional practice. The chapter highlighted the complex nature of the teaching profession, in which teachers are required to manage instructional responsibilities alongside administrative, interpersonal, emotional and organizational demands. These demands may contribute to occupational stress and, when persistent or inadequately managed, may be associated with experiences of burnout and reduced professional well-being.

The chapter also established the central research problem and explained the rationale for examining teacher stress and burnout through an integrated perspective. Rather than treating burnout exclusively as an individual problem, the study recognises the interaction between occupational demands, personal resources and organizational conditions. This perspective provides an important basis for examining resilience and coping while also considering the role of leadership, collegial relationships, professional autonomy, workplace resources and sustainable teaching practices.

The research aim and objectives were presented to establish the specific direction of the investigation, followed by research questions designed to examine the sources and experiences of teacher stress and burnout, the role of resilience and coping, the influence of organizational and social support, and the contribution of sustainable teaching practices to teacher well-being. The significance of the study was subsequently discussed in relation to teachers, educational organizations, teacher education, policymakers, students, researchers and the broader sustainability of the teaching profession.

The scope of the study clarified the boundaries of the investigation, while the definitions of key terms established the conceptual meanings of teacher stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping, sustainable teaching practices and related constructs. These definitions provide a consistent foundation for the subsequent chapters.

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Overall, Chapter 1 establishes the conceptual and research foundation for examining how teachers experience and respond to occupational stress and burnout. The following chapter builds upon this foundation through a critical review of the existing literature on teacher stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping, sustainable teaching practices and organizational support. It will also examine previous empirical research and theoretical perspectives in order to identify the research gap and develop the conceptual framework that guides the present study.

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CHAPTER 2 — LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Teacher stress and burnout have become important areas of research because of their implications for teachers' well-being, professional functioning and the sustainability of the teaching profession. Teaching is a complex occupation that requires individuals to manage instructional responsibilities alongside classroom management, assessment, administrative duties, communication with students and parents, professional development and increasingly diverse learner needs. These responsibilities are performed within organizational environments that differ considerably in terms of workload, leadership, autonomy, resources and expectations. Consequently, teacher stress and burnout cannot be understood adequately as purely individual experiences. They are also shaped by the conditions under which teachers work and by the resources available to them to respond to occupational demands.

Contemporary international evidence illustrates the continuing relevance of this issue. The OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2024 reports that, on average across participating OECD education systems, approximately 19% of lower-secondary teachers experience "a lot" of work-related stress. However, the distribution is highly uneven across education systems, demonstrating that teacher stress is not a uniform phenomenon. The same survey identifies workload, maintaining classroom discipline, adapting teaching to diverse learning needs and accountability as important sources of occupational strain. General administrative work is particularly notable, with approximately 52% of teachers, on average across OECD education systems, reporting it as a source of work-related stress.

The literature also indicates that teacher well-being should not be conceptualised simply as the absence of stress or burnout. A systematic review by Hascher and Waber (2021), which examined 98 empirical studies published between 2000 and 2019, found substantial variation in how teacher well-being was conceptualised and measured. The review identified individual and contextual predictors, with social relationships emerging as an important factor, and argued for more precise and domain-specific approaches to understanding teacher well-being. This observation is important for the present study because an exclusive focus on negative outcomes may overlook the resources and conditions that allow teachers to function effectively despite occupational demands.

The distinction between occupational stress and burnout is also fundamental to the literature. Stress may arise when teachers perceive that professional demands exceed, or are difficult to manage with, the resources available to them. Burnout represents a more specific work-related phenomenon associated with chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. The World Health Organization's ICD-11 description identifies three dimensions of burnout: energy depletion or exhaustion, increased psychological distance from one's job or feelings of negativism or cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy. WHO further specifies that burnout is an occupational phenomenon rather than a medical condition.

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The literature therefore increasingly supports a multidimensional approach to teacher occupational well-being. Occupational demands may generate stress, but the consequences of those demands are influenced by personal resources, professional relationships and organizational conditions. The OECD's recent evidence similarly demonstrates that teachers' well-being varies in relation to both the demands they encounter and the resources available to them. Teachers who experience difficulties with classroom discipline, workload, adapting teaching to diverse needs or accountability tend to report poorer workplace well-being, while teacher self-efficacy and relevant support can influence how professional demands are experienced.

This chapter critically reviews the literature relevant to the present investigation. It first examines the concepts of teacher stress and burnout and considers how they are related while remaining conceptually distinct. It then considers the principal occupational and organizational factors associated with teacher burnout and examines its consequences for teachers' psychological, physical and professional functioning. Subsequent sections of the chapter extend this discussion to teacher well-being, resilience, coping strategies, sustainable teaching practices and organizational support before reviewing previous empirical research and identifying the research gap addressed by the study.

2.2 Teacher Stress and Burnout

Teacher stress has been conceptualised in the literature as a response to the demands associated with performing the teaching role. These demands may be cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, physical or organizational and can vary substantially between teachers and educational contexts. Importantly, occupational stress should not be interpreted simply as the presence of demanding work. Demands become particularly problematic when teachers perceive that they lack sufficient time, control, support, resources or personal capacity to respond effectively. The OECD's TALIS 2024 framework similarly describes job demands as aspects of work requiring sustained effort that may generate psychological or physiological strain and emphasises the importance of the relationship between demands and available resources.

Teaching contains several characteristics that can make the profession particularly susceptible to occupational stress. Teachers are required to perform multiple tasks simultaneously, often moving between instructional planning, classroom management, assessment, administrative responsibilities and interpersonal interactions. The emotional dimension of teaching is also significant because teachers are expected to establish relationships with learners, respond to behavioural and emotional needs, maintain classroom engagement and manage difficult interactions while continuing to meet instructional objectives. These requirements mean that teachers' occupational experiences cannot be reduced to teaching hours alone.

Recent international evidence provides further support for this multidimensional understanding. TALIS 2024 found that approximately half of teachers across OECD education systems identified excessive administrative work as a source of work-related stress. The report also demonstrates that the relationship between administrative work and stress is not explained simply by the number of hours spent on administration. In several education systems, the proportion of teachers reporting administrative work as a stressor was high even where the reported amount of administrative time was comparatively limited. This suggests that the nature, distribution and perceived interference of administrative tasks may be important alongside their volume.

Workload is another central dimension of teacher stress. However, workload should be understood in broader terms than the number of teaching hours. Preparation, marking, communication with parents, administrative duties, meetings and other professional responsibilities contribute to teachers' total occupational workload. TALIS 2024 indicates that additional time spent on administrative tasks, marking and communicating with parents is associated with particularly pronounced reductions in the OECD's workplace well-being measure. The analysis found that a one-standard-deviation increase in

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time spent on these activities was associated, on average, with a reduction of more than 10% of a standard deviation in teacher well-being, while a comparable increase in teaching or lesson-preparation time was associated with a reduction of approximately 8%. These are associations rather than evidence that the additional time itself causes the decline in well-being, but they demonstrate the importance of considering the composition of workload rather than treating all working time as equivalent.

Classroom discipline and student behaviour represent another important dimension of teacher stress. Managing behaviour requires sustained emotional and cognitive effort and may become particularly demanding when teachers perceive insufficient support or authority to address persistent classroom difficulties. TALIS 2024 identifies maintaining discipline as an important correlate of teacher well-being and job satisfaction. The relationship is particularly notable where teachers report intimidation or verbal abuse from students as a source of stress. These findings reinforce earlier research suggesting that the quality of teacher-student interactions and classroom conditions are important components of teachers' occupational experiences.

Teachers may also experience stress when required to adapt instruction to increasingly diverse learning needs. Differentiated instruction can involve additional planning, assessment and classroom-management demands, particularly where teachers have limited resources or insufficient specialist support. TALIS 2024 identifies adapting teaching to diverse learning needs as one of the sources of stress associated with differences in teacher well-being. This does not imply that diversity itself is inherently stressful; rather, the finding points towards the importance of whether teachers possess adequate professional resources and organizational support to meet diverse learner needs.

The relationship between teacher stress and burnout requires careful conceptual differentiation. Stress can be temporary, situation-specific and potentially adaptive when individuals are able to recover after periods of heightened demand. Burnout, in contrast, refers to a more persistent work-related syndrome associated with chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. WHO's ICD-11 definition identifies exhaustion, psychological distance or cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy as its three central dimensions. Thus, although stress and burnout are closely related, they should not be treated as interchangeable constructs.

The exhaustion dimension concerns a depletion of physical and emotional energy associated with prolonged occupational demands. Teachers experiencing sustained exhaustion may feel unable to recover adequately between working periods and may perceive ordinary professional tasks as increasingly demanding. Psychological distance or cynicism represents a shift in the individual's relationship with work, potentially involving detachment, negativity or reduced emotional investment in professional responsibilities. The third dimension, reduced professional efficacy, concerns perceptions of diminished effectiveness or accomplishment in one's professional role. These dimensions are analytically useful because they demonstrate that burnout involves more than simply feeling tired.

The relationship between stress and burnout can therefore be understood as a process rather than a single event. Persistent occupational demands may increase stress, particularly when resources are inadequate. If these conditions continue without sufficient recovery or support, the resulting strain may contribute to exhaustion and changes in teachers' relationship with their work. Over time, this may be accompanied by reduced perceptions of professional effectiveness. However, the relationship should not be assumed to be inevitable or linear. Teachers working under demanding conditions may experience high levels of stress without developing burnout when adequate personal, interpersonal and organizational resources are available.

This distinction is particularly important for the present study because it supports an analysis that considers both risk and protection. Focusing only on stressors may provide an incomplete explanation

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of why teachers exposed to similar working conditions report different levels of well-being or burnout. The literature on teacher well-being demonstrates the relevance of social relationships and contextual resources, while current international evidence highlights the importance of self-efficacy and support in teachers' responses to professional demands.

Table 2.1. Distinction Between Teacher Stress and Teacher Burnout

Dimension	Teacher Stress	Teacher Burnout
Basic concept	Response to perceived occupational demands or pressures	Work-related syndrome associated with chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed
Typical time frame	May be temporary or recurring	Generally associated with persistent and chronic occupational strain
Core experience	Feeling pressured, overloaded or unable to meet demands effectively	Exhaustion combined with psychological distance/cynicism and reduced professional efficacy
Relationship with work	Individual may remain highly engaged despite pressure	May involve detachment, negativity or reduced psychological investment
Professional efficacy	May remain intact despite stress	Reduced professional efficacy is a central dimension
Potential response	Recovery, coping and additional resources may reduce stress	May require sustained changes in demands, resources and working conditions
Position in this study	Examined as an important occupational experience and potential precursor to burnout	Examined as a multidimensional work-related outcome associated with chronic occupational stress

The distinction presented in Table 2.1 is important for interpreting the existing literature. Studies that use "stress," "burnout," "occupational strain" and "teacher well-being" as interchangeable concepts may produce apparently inconsistent findings because they are measuring different aspects of teachers' professional experiences. A rigorous examination therefore requires attention to construct definitions, measurement approaches and the specific dimensions being investigated.

There is also increasing recognition that teacher well-being and burnout should be considered in relation to one another without assuming that they represent opposite ends of a single continuum. Hascher and Waber's systematic review demonstrates that teacher well-being has been conceptualised through multiple theoretical traditions and includes positive dimensions that cannot be captured adequately through the absence of negative outcomes alone. Their review also found that social relationships were particularly important among the identified predictors and correlates of teacher well-being. This supports an approach in which the present study examines not only what produces occupational strain but also what enables teachers to function and remain engaged under demanding circumstances.

The literature consequently points towards a more integrated understanding of teacher occupational health. Teacher stress and burnout are influenced by the interaction of workload, classroom demands, emotional labour, professional expectations and organizational conditions, while individual resources such as self-efficacy and resilience may shape how these demands are experienced. This provides a theoretical basis for examining coping and resilience in subsequent sections of the literature review while maintaining that individual resources should not substitute for appropriate organizational conditions.

2.3 Causes and Effects of Teacher Burnout

Teacher burnout is generally understood as emerging from prolonged exposure to occupational demands that are not adequately balanced by available resources. The causes of burnout are therefore

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multidimensional and may operate at several levels. Individual characteristics, classroom conditions, workload, organizational culture, leadership, professional relationships and broader educational expectations can interact to influence teachers' experiences. Consequently, no single occupational factor can adequately explain burnout across different educational contexts.

One of the most consistently identified contributors is excessive or poorly structured workload. Teachers' workload extends beyond direct classroom teaching to include lesson planning, assessment, marking, administrative work, meetings, communication with parents and other professional responsibilities. When these activities compete for limited time, teachers may experience difficulties recovering outside work. TALIS 2024 provides contemporary evidence that administrative work is reported as a source of stress by approximately 52% of teachers across OECD education systems. It also indicates that additional time spent on administrative tasks, marking and communicating with parents has a particularly strong association with lower workplace well-being.

The significance of workload lies not only in quantity but also in the extent to which teachers perceive control over their work. A high workload may be experienced differently when teachers have autonomy, adequate planning time and supportive leadership compared with circumstances in which demands are imposed unpredictably and resources are limited. This distinction is important because it suggests that reducing burnout cannot necessarily be achieved by reducing one task in isolation. Organizational arrangements concerning workload allocation, scheduling, staffing, administrative expectations and professional autonomy may collectively influence teachers' capacity to manage occupational demands.

Classroom management and student behaviour constitute another important source of occupational strain. Teachers must simultaneously maintain an environment conducive to learning and respond to behavioural difficulties, interpersonal conflict and diverse student needs. Persistent disciplinary challenges can consume instructional time and emotional resources, particularly when teachers feel that they lack sufficient institutional support. TALIS 2024 identifies maintaining discipline as an important factor associated with teachers' workplace well-being and job satisfaction, and reports that intimidation or verbal abuse from students is particularly strongly associated with lower job satisfaction.

The emotional demands of teaching may intensify these pressures. Teachers are expected to remain emotionally available to students while regulating their own responses to challenging interactions. They may encounter students experiencing academic difficulties, behavioural problems or emotional distress while simultaneously being responsible for maintaining instructional progress. Such emotional labour can become particularly demanding when teachers have limited opportunities for recovery or professional support. The cumulative nature of these demands helps explain why burnout should be considered in relation to the broader work environment rather than attributed to isolated stressful incidents.

Accountability and performance expectations may also contribute to occupational strain. Teachers are increasingly expected to demonstrate student progress, meet curricular requirements, adapt instruction and respond to institutional or policy changes. Accountability can support educational improvement when accompanied by appropriate resources and clear expectations; however, where performance expectations are perceived as excessive, uncontrollable or disconnected from classroom realities, they may become a source of stress. TALIS 2024 identifies accountability among the demands associated with differences in teacher well-being across participating education systems.

Adapting teaching to diverse learner needs represents another potentially demanding area. Contemporary classrooms may include students with different levels of prior attainment, language backgrounds, learning needs and social circumstances. Differentiation requires teachers to make continuous instructional decisions and may increase preparation and classroom-management

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requirements. However, diversity should not itself be regarded as a cause of burnout. Rather, the extent to which diversity becomes stressful may depend on whether teachers have sufficient training, time, specialist assistance, teaching materials and organizational support. This distinction prevents the literature from locating the source of burnout in students or teachers themselves when the underlying issue may instead concern the adequacy of professional resources.

Leadership and organizational culture also influence teachers' experiences of occupational strain. Supportive leadership may provide practical assistance, recognition, communication and opportunities for teachers to participate in decisions affecting their work. Conversely, weak communication, limited recognition, low autonomy or insufficient support may increase teachers' perceptions that professional demands are difficult to manage. The systematic review of teacher well-being by Hascher and Waber highlights the importance of social relationships among the predictors and correlates identified in the literature. This reinforces the argument that teacher well-being and burnout are embedded within interpersonal and organizational environments.

Professional relationships with colleagues can similarly function as important contextual resources. Teaching can involve substantial individual responsibility, and teachers may experience isolation when opportunities for collaboration and peer support are limited. Collegial relationships can provide emotional support, practical advice, shared problem-solving and opportunities to normalize difficult professional experiences. However, collegial relationships should not be treated as a substitute for organizational reform. Support from colleagues may help teachers manage demands, but it cannot independently resolve excessive workload, inadequate staffing or poorly designed administrative requirements.

Work-life imbalance represents another pathway through which occupational demands may contribute to burnout. Teaching frequently involves work outside scheduled classroom hours, including preparation, marking and communication. When professional responsibilities consistently extend into personal time, opportunities for psychological detachment and recovery may be reduced. TALIS 2024 reports that only around 11% of teachers, on average across OECD education systems, report that their work leaves them "a lot" of time for personal life. This finding is particularly relevant because recovery is an important component of maintaining sustainable professional functioning.

Individual factors also have a role, although their interpretation requires caution. Teachers differ in self-efficacy, coping resources, prior experience, emotional regulation and perceptions of control. TALIS 2024 reports that self-efficacy is related to teachers' experiences of professional demands and that teachers' confidence in managing teaching and classroom-related tasks can influence how occupational challenges are experienced. Such findings support the examination of personal resources in the present study while avoiding the assumption that individual characteristics alone determine burnout.

The consequences of teacher burnout extend across psychological, physical and professional domains. At the individual level, persistent burnout may involve exhaustion, psychological distance from work and reduced perceptions of professional efficacy. These experiences may affect teachers' motivation, job satisfaction and commitment to their profession. Contemporary research therefore increasingly treats burnout not merely as an undesirable feeling but as a condition with implications for teachers' broader functioning.

Physical health represents another important consequence. A systematic review by Madigan and colleagues examined 21 studies involving 5,267 teachers and found that teacher burnout was consistently associated with somatic complaints and illnesses, including headaches, gastrointestinal illness and voice disorders. The review also identified associations with biomarkers related to hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal-axis functioning and inflammation. The authors nevertheless

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highlighted the need for stronger theoretical integration in future research, which is important because associations should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of direct causation.

Burnout may also have implications for teachers' professional functioning. Reduced energy and psychological distance may affect teachers' capacity to sustain engagement with instructional responsibilities, while reduced professional efficacy may influence perceptions of teaching competence. The relationship between teacher well-being and teaching quality is supported by the systematic review conducted by Hascher and Waber, although the authors noted that research on outcomes remained comparatively limited. Thus, claims concerning the effects of burnout on classroom practice should be made carefully and should distinguish between established associations and causal evidence.

The broader organizational consequences are also relevant. Low teacher well-being has been associated in the literature with outcomes such as absenteeism, reduced commitment and intentions to leave the profession, while the OECD identifies teacher well-being, job satisfaction and career intentions as interconnected professional outcomes. When experienced across a substantial proportion of a workforce, these outcomes may create challenges for staff continuity, institutional knowledge and the stability of educational provision.

Importantly, the consequences of burnout should not be viewed as inevitable or irreversible. Evidence concerning interventions suggests that teacher well-being and occupational mental health can respond to targeted support. A systematic review and meta-analysis of interventions involving school teachers identified 88 eligible studies, with 46 included in quantitative meta-analyses. Among randomized controlled trials, the interventions demonstrated effects on stress, anxiety, depression, professional burnout and well-being. These findings are relevant because they indicate that teacher burnout is not simply an individual characteristic but a condition that can be addressed through structured interventions. At the same time, intervention evidence varies in design, content and outcome measurement, meaning that no single intervention model can be assumed to be universally effective.

Table 2.2. Major Causes and Potential Effects of Teacher Burnout

Level	Contributing factor	Possible pathway	Potential consequence
Individual	Limited coping resources	Difficulty managing sustained demands	Exhaustion and reduced well-being
Individual	Low perceived self-efficacy	Greater difficulty responding to challenging tasks	Increased occupational strain
Workload	Excessive teaching and non-teaching responsibilities	Reduced recovery time and competing demands	Exhaustion and work-life imbalance
Administrative	Excessive paperwork and bureaucratic tasks	Time diverted from core professional activities	Stress and reduced well-being
Classroom	Persistent discipline and behavioural challenges	Increased emotional and cognitive demands	Stress, exhaustion and reduced job satisfaction
Instructional	Diverse learning needs with insufficient resources	Additional planning and adaptation demands	Occupational strain
Organizational	Limited leadership or institutional support	Fewer resources for managing demands	Greater vulnerability to burnout
Interpersonal	Weak collegial support	Reduced emotional and practical resources	Isolation and lower well-being

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Accountability	High or poorly supported performance expectations	Perceived pressure and reduced control	Stress and professional strain
Work-life interface	Work extending into personal time	Reduced recovery and psychological detachment	Exhaustion and reduced well-being
Professional outcome	Persistent burnout	Reduced energy and professional engagement	Lower job satisfaction and possible withdrawal intentions

The literature reviewed in this section therefore indicates that teacher burnout is best understood as a multidimensional outcome of prolonged occupational strain rather than as the result of a single stressor. Workload, administrative responsibilities, classroom management, emotional demands, accountability and work-life imbalance may contribute to occupational stress, while leadership, collegial relationships, autonomy, self-efficacy and other resources may influence how those demands are experienced. The consequences can extend from exhaustion and reduced well-being to physical health complaints, diminished professional functioning and broader organizational outcomes.

A significant implication of this literature is that individual coping and resilience should not be positioned as replacements for appropriate working conditions. Evidence that personal resources matter does not demonstrate that teachers should simply become more resilient in response to structurally demanding environments. Instead, a comprehensive understanding of burnout requires attention to both the capacity of individuals to cope and the extent to which schools and education systems provide sufficient resources, support and manageable conditions.

This distinction provides an important foundation for the subsequent sections of the literature review. Having established the relationship between teacher stress, burnout, occupational demands and their potential consequences, the next stage is to examine **teacher well-being and mental health** as broader constructs. This will allow the study to move beyond a deficit-oriented understanding of teacher health and consider the positive psychological, professional and organizational resources that may enable teachers to remain engaged and effective in demanding educational environments.

2.4 Teacher Well-Being and Mental Health

Teacher well-being has increasingly become a central concern in educational research because teachers' psychological and professional functioning is closely connected with the sustainability of their work. Although teacher well-being is frequently discussed alongside stress and burnout, it should not be understood merely as the absence of negative psychological outcomes. The OECD conceptualises teacher well-being in relation to positive and effective functioning at work and examines dimensions including work-related stress, the time available for personal life, and the perceived impact of work on mental and physical health. This broader perspective is important because a teacher may experience occupational demands while continuing to maintain professional engagement, positive functioning and a sense of effectiveness. Conversely, the absence of severe burnout does not necessarily indicate high levels of well-being.

The conceptualisation of teacher well-being has nevertheless remained inconsistent across the research literature. Hascher and Waber's systematic review identified considerable variation in how teacher well-being has been defined, operationalised and measured. Their review of 98 studies demonstrated that teacher well-being encompasses multiple dimensions and is influenced by both individual and contextual factors. Social relationships were identified as particularly important within the literature, highlighting the need to understand teacher well-being within the interpersonal and organizational environment of schools rather than treating it exclusively as an individual psychological characteristic.

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More recent quantitative evidence further supports this multidimensional perspective. A meta-analysis of teacher well-being encompassing 173 studies and 89,876 participants examined antecedents, consequences and correlates using the Job Demands–Resources framework. The analysis found that hope, autonomous motivation, psychological capital and job competencies were among the strongest positive predictors of overall teacher well-being, while neuroticism and disengagement coping were among the strongest negative predictors. These findings are particularly relevant to the present study because they demonstrate that teacher well-being is associated with both personal resources and coping processes, while also supporting a theoretical approach in which individual resources are considered alongside occupational demands and job resources.

The relationship between teacher well-being and working conditions is particularly important. Recent OECD TALIS 2024 evidence indicates that teachers' well-being is related to the demands they experience and the resources available to them. Only approximately 11% of teachers, on average across participating OECD education systems, reported that their work left them "a lot" of time for their personal lives. At the same time, teacher self-efficacy was positively associated with well-being and job satisfaction after accounting for teacher and school characteristics. These findings indicate that teacher well-being is not determined solely by the amount of work teachers perform. The extent to which teachers perceive themselves as capable of managing professional demands and the extent to which their working environment provides adequate resources may also be important.

Mental health forms an important component of this discussion. Teachers may experience stress, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, depressive symptoms or other psychological difficulties in response to prolonged occupational pressures. However, it is important to distinguish occupational burnout from clinical mental-health conditions. Burnout is defined by the World Health Organization as an occupational phenomenon resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed, whereas mental-health disorders involve separate diagnostic frameworks. This distinction is methodologically important because research that uses general measures of psychological distress, burnout scales and broader well-being measures may be examining related but non-identical constructs.

The relationship between occupational conditions and mental health is also evident in intervention research. Beames et al. conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of interventions targeting the mental health, professional burnout and well-being of school teachers. The review identified 88 studies, of which 46 were included in the meta-analyses. Among randomized controlled trials, the interventions demonstrated large effects on stress and moderate effects on anxiety, depression, professional burnout and well-being immediately after intervention. These results suggest that teacher mental health and well-being are responsive to intervention, although the diversity of interventions and outcome measures means that the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that one intervention model is universally effective.

The intervention literature also illustrates the importance of distinguishing individual-level approaches from broader working conditions. Mindfulness-based interventions, for example, have received substantial attention in teacher well-being research. A systematic review of 39 studies examining mindfulness-based interventions for K–12 teachers found promising evidence for reducing stress and burnout and improving other psychological outcomes. However, the review identified considerable variation in intervention components, facilitators, duration and outcome measurement, limiting the ability to establish a standardized intervention model.

These findings suggest that teacher well-being should not be reduced to the responsibility of individual teachers. Individual strategies may provide useful resources, but their effectiveness may depend on whether teachers operate in environments characterized by manageable demands, supportive relationships and sufficient professional resources. The JD-R perspective is therefore useful because it allows teacher well-being to be examined as the outcome of an interaction between occupational demands and available resources.

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Teacher well-being also has implications for professional functioning and the wider educational system. OECD evidence indicates that higher teacher well-being is associated with greater self-efficacy, job satisfaction, motivation and commitment to the profession, while low well-being can have implications for absenteeism, turnover and instructional quality. The relationship should nevertheless be interpreted cautiously because many studies in this area are correlational. It is therefore more appropriate to describe these variables as interconnected rather than assuming that a particular well-being factor directly causes a specific professional outcome.

Table 2.3. Dimensions and Influences of Teacher Well-Being

Dimension	Description	Relevant influences
Psychological well-being	Teachers' emotional and psychological functioning in relation to their professional lives	Stress, coping, resilience, psychological resources
Professional well-being	Teachers' sense of effectiveness, engagement and satisfaction with their professional role	Self-efficacy, autonomy, professional competence
Work-life well-being	Ability to maintain a reasonable relationship between professional and personal responsibilities	Workload, working hours, recovery opportunities
Social well-being	Quality of teachers' professional and interpersonal relationships	Collegial support, leadership, school climate
Physical well-being	Perceived physical health and effects of occupational demands	Workload, stress, recovery, working conditions
Organizational well-being	Teachers' experience of the institutional environment in which they work	Leadership, resources, autonomy, organizational support

The literature therefore supports a multidimensional interpretation of teacher well-being in which psychological, professional, social, physical and organizational dimensions interact. This interpretation is particularly relevant to the present study because it provides a positive counterpart to the literature on stress and burnout. Rather than asking only why teachers become distressed, the study also considers what enables teachers to remain healthy, effective and professionally engaged.

2.5 Resilience and Coping Strategies

Resilience has become an increasingly prominent concept in research on teacher well-being because teaching requires professionals to respond repeatedly to changing demands, unexpected difficulties and emotionally challenging circumstances. However, the meaning of resilience within educational research is not entirely uniform. It has been described variously as a personal capacity, a process of adaptation, an outcome of successful adjustment and a dynamic interaction between individuals and their environments. This variation is important because resilience can otherwise be interpreted too narrowly as an individual trait that teachers either possess or lack.

Contemporary research increasingly conceptualises teacher resilience as dynamic and context-dependent. Lu et al.'s systematic review examined 54 studies on teacher resilience through the Job Demands–Resources framework. The review found that research has increasingly examined resilience in relation to both demands and resources, although resource factors have received greater attention than demand factors. The authors also identified the need for further differentiation between hindrance demands and challenge demands. This distinction is valuable because not all demanding experiences necessarily have the same consequences. Some demands may obstruct teachers' professional functioning, while others may be experienced as challenging but manageable when sufficient resources are available.

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Within the JD-R perspective, resilience can be understood as a personal resource that may influence how teachers respond to job demands. Personal resources include characteristics and beliefs that enable individuals to influence or manage aspects of their work environment. Teacher self-efficacy is one example. TALIS 2024 reports that teachers with higher self-efficacy tend to report greater well-being and job satisfaction, and in many participating education systems they are less likely to identify classroom discipline as a source of stress. In 34 of the 54 education systems with available data, teachers with high instructional self-efficacy were less likely to report maintaining classroom discipline as a source of stress.

This evidence does not mean that resilience or self-efficacy eliminates occupational stress. Rather, personal resources may influence teachers' perceptions of control, their responses to demanding situations and their ability to mobilise appropriate coping strategies. This distinction is particularly important for the present study because resilience should not be used to shift responsibility for occupational conditions onto individual teachers. A teacher may demonstrate considerable resilience while working in a structurally demanding environment, but this does not mean that excessive workload, insufficient staffing or inadequate organizational support should be regarded as acceptable.

Coping strategies represent another important component of teachers' responses to occupational stress. Coping can involve cognitive, emotional, behavioural and interpersonal processes through which individuals attempt to manage demanding circumstances. Teachers may respond by modifying how they approach a problem, seeking support from colleagues, changing their work practices, establishing boundaries, engaging in reflective activities or using strategies aimed at emotional regulation and recovery. The effectiveness of coping is likely to depend on the nature of the stressor and the resources available to the teacher.

The distinction between adaptive and maladaptive coping is therefore important. Strategies that address the source of a problem or facilitate recovery may support well-being, whereas disengagement and avoidance may provide short-term relief while failing to address persistent occupational demands. The teacher well-being meta-analysis discussed above found disengagement coping to be among the strongest negative predictors of overall well-being. This finding provides empirical support for distinguishing coping strategies according to their potential relationship with longer-term well-being rather than simply counting the number of coping behaviours teachers report.

Social coping is particularly relevant in teaching because professional work is embedded within relationships. Colleagues can provide practical assistance, emotional support, information and opportunities for collaborative problem-solving. Leadership may similarly provide access to resources, professional recognition and greater clarity concerning expectations. The systematic review of teacher resilience using the JD-R framework emphasizes the importance of resources in supporting resilience, including resources provided by others such as leadership support.

Professional autonomy can also contribute to teachers' capacity to cope with occupational demands. Where teachers have some control over how they organize instruction, respond to classroom situations and manage aspects of their professional responsibilities, demanding circumstances may be experienced differently from situations in which teachers perceive very limited control. Autonomy should therefore be understood not as the absence of organizational guidance but as an appropriate degree of professional discretion within a supportive institutional structure.

Coping strategies can also involve recovery and psychological detachment from work. The importance of recovery is particularly relevant in teaching because professional responsibilities frequently extend beyond classroom hours. If teachers remain cognitively engaged with work during non-working periods, opportunities to restore psychological and emotional resources may be reduced. In this respect, sustainable coping involves not only responding to immediate stressors but also maintaining sufficient opportunities for recovery over time.

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The intervention literature provides some evidence that coping-related skills can be developed. The systematic review by Beames et al. found that psychological interventions targeting teacher mental health, burnout and well-being can produce improvements in several outcomes, including stress, burnout and well-being. Similarly, the review of mindfulness-based interventions identified 39 studies and found promising evidence for reducing teacher stress and burnout, although substantial methodological and intervention variability remained. These findings suggest that coping resources may be strengthened, but they also demonstrate the need for caution when generalising from individual interventions to the teaching profession as a whole.

Table 2.4. Resilience and Coping Resources Relevant to Teacher Well-Being

Resource or strategy	Role in responding to occupational demands	Potential contribution
Self-efficacy	Confidence in managing teaching and classroom demands	Greater perceived control and professional functioning
Problem-focused coping	Addresses or modifies the source of a stressor	Potential reduction in manageable occupational demands
Emotional regulation	Helps teachers manage emotional responses to demanding situations	Reduced emotional reactivity and improved functioning
Social support	Provides emotional, informational and practical assistance	Greater access to interpersonal resources
Collegial collaboration	Enables shared problem-solving and professional learning	Reduced isolation and greater collective resources
Professional autonomy	Provides appropriate control over aspects of professional work	Greater perceived agency
Mindfulness and reflective practices	Supports awareness, emotional regulation and recovery	Potential reduction in stress and burnout
Recovery and boundaries	Creates separation between work and non-work time	Restoration of psychological resources
Professional learning	Strengthens knowledge and skills for managing professional demands	Greater competence and confidence

The literature indicates that resilience and coping are best understood as interconnected with the environments in which teachers work. Personal resources may help teachers manage demands, but resources within schools can strengthen or constrain their effectiveness. This is consistent with the JD-R perspective, which emphasizes that well-being results from the balance between job demands and job and personal resources.

A further implication is that resilience should not be equated with the capacity to endure unlimited occupational pressure. Such an interpretation risks individualising a problem that may partly originate in organizational conditions. Instead, resilience in the present study is understood as a dynamic resource that enables teachers to adapt, recover and continue functioning while recognizing that sustainable well-being also requires appropriate professional and organizational conditions.

2.6 Sustainable Teaching Practices

The concept of sustainable teaching extends the discussion of teacher well-being by asking how teachers can maintain effective professional practice over time without persistent occupational demands undermining their psychological, physical or professional functioning. Sustainability therefore differs from short-term stress management. A teacher may successfully manage an intense period of work through additional effort, for example, but if such effort becomes continuously necessary, the practice may not be sustainable. Sustainable teaching consequently requires

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consideration of workload, recovery, professional resources, relationships, autonomy and the capacity to remain engaged with teaching over the longer term.

Although sustainable teaching has not been conceptualised through a single universally accepted framework, the concept can be connected to established research on teacher well-being, occupational demands and resources. The OECD's TALIS 2024 framework explicitly places teacher well-being, working conditions, professional development, autonomy and intentions to remain in the profession within the broader study of teaching conditions. This provides a useful foundation for interpreting sustainability as a characteristic of both professional practice and the conditions in which that practice takes place.

One central component of sustainable teaching is manageable workload. Workload sustainability concerns not only the amount of work but also the distribution and predictability of professional demands. Teaching responsibilities can include classroom instruction, lesson preparation, marking, assessment, administrative work, meetings, communication with families and professional development. When these activities consistently exceed available time, teachers may have limited opportunity for recovery or engagement in activities outside work. TALIS 2024 indicates that teachers' perceptions of work-life balance vary considerably across education systems and that only a minority report that their work leaves them "a lot" of time for personal life.

A sustainable approach therefore requires teachers and organizations to distinguish between core instructional responsibilities and additional demands that may be unnecessary, duplicative or poorly distributed. This does not imply that all non-teaching work is undesirable. Administrative tasks, collaboration, assessment and professional learning can all contribute to educational quality. The issue is whether the overall configuration of responsibilities allows teachers sufficient time and resources to perform these activities effectively without creating persistent overload.

Recovery represents a second important dimension of sustainable teaching. Teachers require opportunities to disengage psychologically from work and restore physical and emotional resources. Work that routinely extends into evenings, weekends or personal time may reduce these opportunities. Consequently, sustainable professional practice includes the establishment of reasonable boundaries around work, effective planning and sufficient periods of recovery. Such practices should not, however, be interpreted as placing the entire responsibility for work-life balance on teachers when excessive workloads are determined by institutional arrangements.

Professional autonomy is another important component. Teachers may be better positioned to sustain their work when they have an appropriate degree of control over instructional decisions, classroom practices and aspects of their professional organization. Autonomy can support a sense of agency and may allow teachers to adapt their practices to the needs of their learners and their own professional circumstances. However, autonomy without adequate resources can also increase responsibility without necessarily reducing workload. Sustainable autonomy therefore requires a balance between professional discretion, organizational support and realistic expectations.

Collaboration can also contribute to sustainable teaching. Collegial collaboration allows teachers to share resources, exchange knowledge, discuss classroom challenges and distribute aspects of professional problem-solving. Rather than requiring every teacher to address complex challenges independently, collaborative structures can create collective resources within the workplace. This perspective is consistent with the broader literature demonstrating the importance of social relationships and organizational resources for teacher well-being.

Professional development represents another potentially important dimension of sustainability. Effective professional learning can increase teachers' knowledge, skills and confidence in responding to instructional and classroom challenges. TALIS 2024 identifies professional development as part of

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the broader conditions associated with teachers' work and professional lives. However, professional development itself can become an additional burden when it is poorly scheduled, excessively frequent or disconnected from teachers' actual needs. Sustainable professional learning therefore requires attention to relevance, workload and implementation conditions.

Sustainable teaching also involves maintaining professional efficacy. Teachers who perceive themselves as capable of meeting instructional goals may be better able to manage demanding classroom situations. TALIS 2024 provides evidence of a positive association between teacher self-efficacy and both well-being and job satisfaction, while also showing associations between self-efficacy and the fulfilment of lesson aims. This suggests that supporting teachers' professional competence may have implications beyond instructional performance and may also contribute to their broader professional experience.

Technology and changing professional expectations introduce additional considerations for sustainability. Teachers increasingly operate within environments involving digital platforms, new administrative systems, changing curricular expectations and emerging technologies. Such developments can create opportunities to improve efficiency and professional practice, but they can also introduce additional demands when teachers receive insufficient training or when new systems are added without removing existing responsibilities. Sustainable teaching therefore requires consideration of how new expectations interact with teachers' existing workload and resources.

The concept of sustainable teaching should consequently not be reduced to individual self-care. Self-care activities may be valuable components of maintaining well-being, but they cannot independently resolve structural problems such as excessive workload, insufficient staffing, inadequate resources or unsupportive leadership. A sustainable approach requires alignment between individual practices and organizational conditions. This is consistent with the JD-R perspective, in which well-being depends on the relationship between demands and resources rather than on personal characteristics alone.

Evidence from intervention research reinforces the importance of combining individual and organizational perspectives. Beames et al.'s systematic review demonstrates that psychological interventions can improve teacher stress, burnout and well-being, while the broader literature on teacher resilience emphasizes the importance of job resources alongside personal resources. This suggests that sustainable teaching should involve both individual-level strategies, such as coping and recovery, and organizational-level strategies, such as workload management, supportive leadership and opportunities for collaboration.

Table 2.5. Dimensions of Sustainable Teaching Practices

Dimension	Sustainable practice	Intended contribution
Workload management	Prioritising tasks, realistic scheduling and appropriate distribution of responsibilities	Reduces persistent overload
Work-life boundaries	Maintaining reasonable separation between professional and personal time	Supports recovery
Recovery	Regular opportunities for psychological and physical restoration	Protects longer-term well-being
Professional autonomy	Appropriate control over instructional and professional decisions	Strengthens agency
Collaboration	Sharing resources, planning and problem-solving with colleagues	Builds collective professional resources
Reflective practice	Reviewing teaching experiences and adapting practice	Supports professional learning
Professional development	Relevant and manageable learning opportunities	Strengthens competence and self-efficacy

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Supportive leadership	Accessible leadership, recognition and practical support	Strengthens organizational resources
Efficient use of technology	Using digital tools where they reduce rather than unnecessarily expand workload	Supports efficiency and adaptability
Sustainable coping	Combining problem-solving, social support, emotional regulation and recovery	Supports long-term adaptation

The literature reviewed in this section indicates that sustainable teaching is best understood as a systemic concept rather than a collection of individual stress-management techniques. Teachers need personal resources and effective coping strategies, but they also require working conditions that make sustained professional functioning realistic. The sustainability of teaching therefore depends on the balance between occupational demands and the resources available at individual, interpersonal and organizational levels.

This perspective provides an important bridge between the preceding discussions of well-being, resilience and coping and the subsequent examination of organizational support and work-life balance. It also reinforces the central proposition of the present study: supporting teachers requires more than asking individuals to become better at managing stress. Sustainable professional well-being depends on creating conditions in which teachers can use their personal resources effectively while operating within manageable workloads, supportive relationships and adequately resourced educational environments.

2.7 Organizational Support and Work-Life Balance

Teacher stress and burnout cannot be adequately understood without considering the organizational environment in which teachers perform their professional responsibilities. Although individual characteristics such as resilience, self-efficacy and coping strategies influence teachers' responses to occupational demands, the availability of resources within the workplace can substantially shape whether those demands become persistent sources of strain. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model provides an appropriate theoretical basis for understanding this relationship because it distinguishes between job demands, which require sustained effort and may generate strain, and job resources, which may support goal attainment, reduce the effects of demands and stimulate motivation. Within teaching, organizational support can therefore function as an important resource that influences teachers' capacity to manage workload, classroom challenges and other professional pressures.

Organizational support encompasses several dimensions of teachers' working environments. These include leadership support, collegial relationships, professional autonomy, access to teaching resources, participation in decision-making, recognition, communication and opportunities for professional development. These resources do not operate independently. For example, effective leadership may improve communication and workload allocation, while collegial support may provide teachers with practical assistance and emotional resources when dealing with difficult classroom situations. Similarly, professional autonomy may enable teachers to adapt their instructional practices to particular classroom circumstances rather than responding to all demands through standardized procedures.

Recent international evidence demonstrates the importance of considering organizational conditions alongside individual characteristics. TALIS 2024 reports that teachers' experiences of workload, classroom discipline, adapting teaching to diverse learning needs and accountability are associated with differences in workplace well-being. The OECD also emphasizes that work-related stress can be understood partly as an imbalance between job demands and the resources available to teachers to meet those demands. This provides strong support for examining organizational support as a potential resource rather than treating teacher stress as an exclusively personal response.

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Administrative workload provides an especially useful illustration of this relationship. TALIS 2024 reports that approximately **52% of teachers across OECD education systems identify general administrative work as a source of work-related stress**, making it the most frequently reported stressor among the demands examined. However, the relationship between administrative workload and stress is not explained simply by the amount of time spent on administrative work. In some education systems, teachers report relatively little administrative time while still identifying it as a substantial source of stress. The OECD therefore suggests that the nature, distribution and interaction of administrative tasks may be as important as their absolute quantity.

The organizational context may also influence how teachers experience classroom demands. Teachers who encounter persistent behavioural or disciplinary challenges may require access to leadership assistance, specialist support and collaborative problem-solving. Without such resources, classroom management can become an individual responsibility that adds to teachers' emotional and cognitive workload. TALIS 2024 reports that maintaining discipline is associated with teachers' well-being and job satisfaction and that intimidation or verbal abuse by students is particularly strongly associated with lower job satisfaction. These findings suggest that organizational responses to classroom difficulties may be important components of teacher well-being.

Collegial support is another important organizational resource. Teaching is sometimes characterized as an individually performed occupation because teachers spend substantial portions of their working time directly responsible for their own classrooms. However, collaborative relationships can provide opportunities for sharing instructional resources, discussing difficult cases, receiving emotional support and developing collective solutions to professional problems. The systematic literature on teacher well-being has repeatedly identified social relationships as relevant to teachers' well-being, while more recent research on teacher resilience emphasizes the role of contextual resources such as collegial and administrative support.

Leadership support can similarly influence the organizational conditions under which teachers work. Supportive leadership may involve recognizing teachers' contributions, providing clear expectations, facilitating access to resources and responding constructively to professional concerns. Leadership can also influence whether teachers perceive organizational demands as manageable. Where expectations are clearly communicated and resources are aligned with responsibilities, teachers may have greater opportunities to use their professional skills effectively. Conversely, organizational demands that are unpredictable, poorly communicated or unsupported may increase perceptions of stress.

Professional autonomy is also relevant to the relationship between organizational support and teacher well-being. Autonomy can provide teachers with a degree of control over instructional decisions, classroom practices and professional organization. Such control may strengthen teachers' sense of agency and enable them to adapt their practices to particular learners and circumstances. However, autonomy should not be interpreted as transferring organizational responsibility to teachers. Autonomy without adequate time, staffing or resources may increase responsibility without necessarily improving working conditions. Sustainable autonomy therefore requires a balance between professional discretion and organizational support.

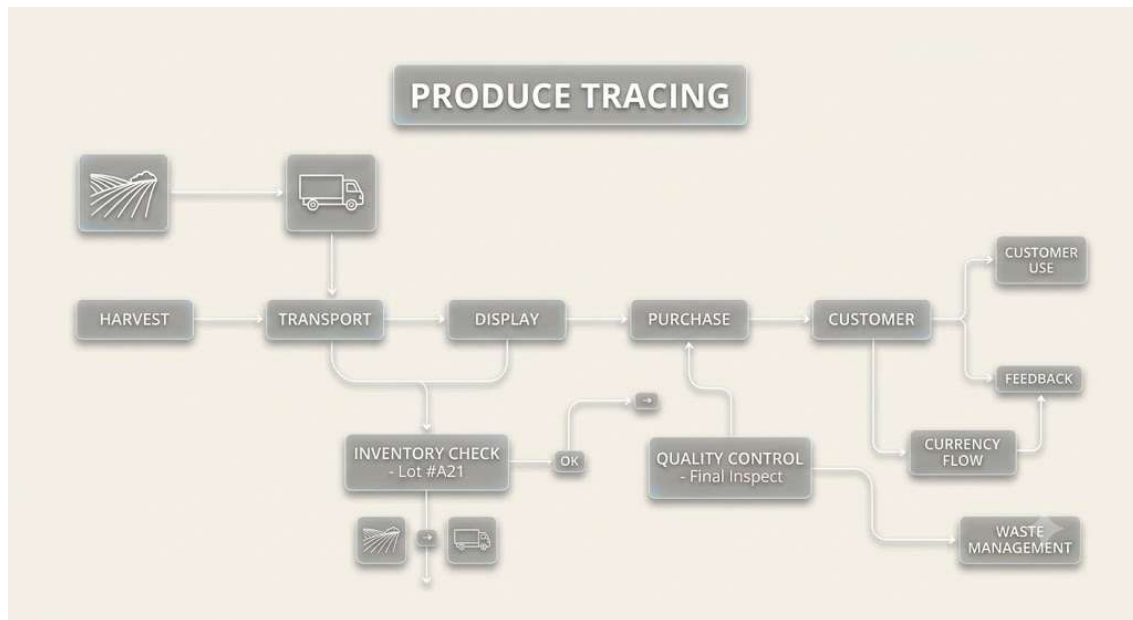
Work-life balance represents a closely related dimension of organizational well-being. Teachers' professional responsibilities frequently extend beyond formal teaching hours through lesson preparation, marking, administrative tasks, communication with parents and professional development. When work regularly enters personal time, opportunities for psychological detachment and recovery may become limited. TALIS 2024 provides a particularly important numerical indication of this issue: on average, only **11% of teachers across OECD education systems report that their work leaves them "a lot" of time for their personal lives**. The proportion varies considerably between education systems, demonstrating that work-life balance is influenced by contextual and organizational conditions rather than being uniform across the profession.

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The relationship between workload and work-life balance is therefore more complex than simply counting working hours. TALIS 2024 reports that full-time teachers spend approximately **23 hours per week teaching and 7 hours on lesson preparation**, while teaching represents approximately **43% of total self-reported working time** when task-based time is considered. Teachers also spend time on marking, administrative tasks, communication with parents and other professional responsibilities. These figures illustrate why formal teaching hours alone provide an incomplete picture of teachers' occupational workload.

The type of work undertaken outside direct teaching also appears to matter. TALIS 2024 regression analyses indicate that, among full-time teachers, a one-standard-deviation increase in time spent on marking, administrative tasks or communicating with parents is associated with **more than a 10% standard-deviation decrease in the teacher workplace well-being measure**. Comparable increases in teaching or lesson-preparation time are associated with approximately an **8% standard-deviation decrease**. These findings are associations rather than proof of causality, but they indicate that non-teaching responsibilities may have a particularly important relationship with teachers' reported well-being.

Figure 2.4. Organizational Support and Work-Life Balance as Resources in the Teacher Stress Process



The evidence therefore suggests that organizational support and work-life balance should be considered as interconnected resources within the teacher well-being process. Organizational support may reduce the effects of occupational demands by providing practical, social and professional resources, while work-life balance may provide opportunities for recovery from those demands. The absence of these resources may increase vulnerability to prolonged stress, whereas their availability may contribute to teachers' capacity to maintain well-being.

However, organizational support should not be understood as a single variable with a universally identical effect. Schools differ substantially in leadership structures, resources, workloads, student populations and professional cultures. Similarly, teachers differ in career stage, professional experience, coping resources and personal circumstances. This variation provides a rationale for examining organizational support alongside resilience and coping rather than assuming that workplace resources alone explain differences in burnout.

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Overall, the literature indicates that teacher well-being is shaped by an interaction between demands and resources. This reinforces the need for a multidimensional examination of teacher stress and burnout in which individual coping and resilience are studied alongside leadership, collegial relationships, workload, autonomy and work-life balance.

2.8 Previous Research

A substantial body of empirical research has examined teacher stress, burnout, well-being, resilience and interventions designed to improve teachers' psychological and professional functioning. However, the literature varies considerably in its theoretical orientation, research design, population, geographical context and measurement of key constructs. Some studies focus primarily on negative outcomes such as stress and burnout, while others examine positive resources such as resilience, self-efficacy, social support and well-being. Reviewing these studies collectively is therefore necessary to determine what is already established and where important questions remain unresolved.

One of the important contributions to the literature is the systematic review by Hascher and Waber, which examined **98 empirical studies** of teacher well-being published between 2000 and 2019. Their review found considerable conceptual and methodological variation across the field and highlighted the importance of social relationships and contextual factors. The review is significant because it demonstrates that teacher well-being cannot be reduced to a single psychological outcome and that the field has historically used diverse definitions and measures. This conceptual diversity remains relevant when comparing empirical findings across studies.

More recent evidence has attempted to strengthen the quantitative synthesis of teacher well-being. Zhou, Slemp and Vella-Brodrick's 2024 meta-analysis included **173 eligible studies involving 89,876 participants**. Using the JD-R theory as the organizing framework, the authors examined antecedents, consequences and correlates of teacher well-being. Hope, autonomous motivation, psychological capital and job competencies emerged among the strongest positive predictors of overall well-being, while disengagement coping was among the strongest negative predictors. The study also identified work-life balance as one of the more pronounced positive predictors of general well-being.

The size of this evidence base is important because it demonstrates that teacher well-being research has moved beyond isolated studies towards cumulative quantitative synthesis. At the same time, Zhou et al. noted that much of the literature relies on self-report measures and that there remains insufficient understanding of occupational well-being as a teacher-specific construct. Their analysis also showed that **only 14 of the 173 studies, approximately 8%, focused exclusively on pre-service teachers**, indicating a strong concentration of existing evidence on in-service teachers.

Research on teacher resilience has developed along a related but somewhat different trajectory. Lu et al.'s systematic review examined **54 studies** of K–12 teacher resilience and organized the literature using the JD-R model. The review identified substantial attention to resource factors, including personal and contextual resources, but found comparatively less attention to job demands. It also highlighted the need to distinguish between different types of demands rather than treating all demands as equivalent.

A more recent systematic review published in 2025 identified **52 studies** examining teacher resilience and found that resilience was predominantly conceptualized as a multidimensional construct. The review grouped resilience dimensions into five broad themes: personal competence and coping style; psychological and emotional resilience; professional competence and motivation; social support and interactions; and adaptability and adjustment. Protective factors were similarly divided into individual and contextual factors, including coping strategies, collegial support, school culture and administrative support. This evidence strengthens the argument that teacher resilience should not be conceptualized solely as an internal personality characteristic.

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The intervention literature provides another important strand of previous research. Beames et al.'s systematic review and meta-analysis identified **88 unique studies**, of which **46 were included in the meta-analyses**, including **23 randomized controlled trials**. In the randomized controlled trials, psychological interventions demonstrated a large effect on stress ($g = 0.93$) and moderate effects on anxiety ($g = 0.65$), depression ($g = 0.51$), professional burnout ($g = 0.57$) and well-being ($g = 0.56$) immediately following intervention. These results provide evidence that teacher mental health and well-being can be influenced through targeted interventions.

However, the intervention literature also raises an important issue for the present research. A 2025 scoping review examined **46 intervention studies involving 7,369 participants across 15 countries**. The interventions included physical activity, mindfulness and meditation, professional development, therapy-based approaches, gratitude practices and combinations of multiple activities. The review found that interventions were primarily focused on improving individual well-being, although some incorporated communal activities. This concentration on individual-level interventions raises questions about whether organizational and structural conditions receive sufficient attention.

The OECD TALIS 2024 dataset provides one of the most extensive contemporary sources of international evidence on teacher working conditions. Across participating OECD education systems, approximately **19% of lower-secondary teachers report experiencing "a lot" of work-related stress**. At the same time, approximately **52% identify general administrative work as a source of stress**, and only around **11% report that their work leaves them "a lot" of time for personal life**. These figures are particularly useful because they place individual studies within a broader international context.

The TALIS evidence also demonstrates that teacher stress is not static across countries or over time. Between 2018 and 2024, the proportion of teachers reporting "a lot" of work-related stress decreased by at least five percentage points in several education systems but increased by at least five percentage points in others. This variation cautions against treating teacher stress as a universal phenomenon with identical causes across all contexts.

Table 2.6. Selected Previous Research Relevant to the Present Study

Study / source	Year	Design / evidence base	Sample / coverage	Principal focus	Key contribution to the present study
Hascher & Waber	2021	Systematic review	98 studies	Teacher well-being	Demonstrated conceptual and methodological diversity and importance of social relationships
Beames et al.	2023	Systematic review + meta-analysis	88 studies; 46 meta-analysed; 23 RCTs	Mental-health, burnout and well-being interventions	Demonstrated measurable effects of psychological interventions
Zhou, Slemp & Vella-Brodrick	2024	Meta-analysis	173 studies; N = 89,876	Teacher well-being antecedents, outcomes and correlates	Provided large-scale quantitative evidence using JD-R theory
Lu et al.	2024	Systematic review	54 studies	Teacher resilience through JD-R	Highlighted interaction between demands, resources and resilience

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Teacher resilience systematic review	2025	Systematic review	52 studies	Resilience and protective factors	Identified individual and contextual dimensions of teacher resilience
Teacher intervention scoping review	2025	Scoping review	46 studies; 7,369 participants; 15 countries	Interventions for teacher well-being/burnout	Demonstrated broad intervention diversity and strong emphasis on individual-level approaches
OECD TALIS 2024	2025	International survey	54 education systems	Teacher demands and well-being	Provides contemporary cross-national evidence on workload, stress and work-life balance

The previous research demonstrates several areas of convergence. First, teacher well-being is consistently related to a combination of personal and contextual factors. Second, workload and other job demands remain important components of teacher stress. Third, resilience and self-efficacy appear to function as relevant personal resources, while social and organizational support provide contextual resources. Fourth, interventions can improve aspects of teacher mental health and well-being, although the intervention literature remains heterogeneous.

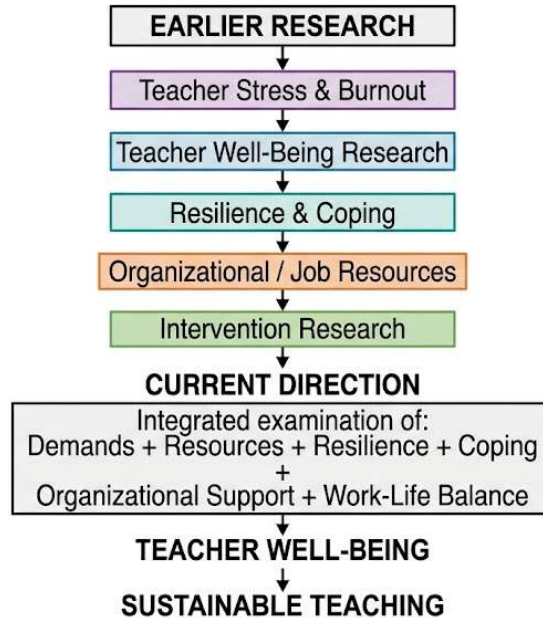
At the same time, the research base contains important limitations. A considerable proportion of the literature relies on cross-sectional self-report data, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships. This is particularly important when interpreting associations between stress, burnout, resilience and organizational support. For example, higher organizational support may contribute to lower burnout, but it is also possible that teachers experiencing lower burnout perceive their organizational environment more positively. Longitudinal and mixed-method research can help clarify these reciprocal relationships.

A second limitation concerns conceptual fragmentation. Teacher stress, burnout, well-being, resilience and coping are frequently studied separately. Although each construct has developed a substantial evidence base, fewer studies examine how these variables interact within an integrated framework. The 2024 teacher well-being meta-analysis represents an important step towards integration through the JD-R framework, but the authors themselves identify continuing limitations concerning measurement and the conceptualization of occupational well-being.

A third issue concerns the balance between individual and organizational explanations. Intervention studies frequently focus on mindfulness, psychological skills, coping and other individual-level approaches. The 2025 scoping review's finding that intervention content primarily focused on individual well-being illustrates this tendency. However, the broader teacher literature demonstrates that workload, administrative demands, leadership and working conditions remain important components of the problem. A comprehensive approach therefore needs to consider both individual resources and the organizational environment.

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Figure 2.5. Evolution of the Evidence Base on Teacher Well-Being



The progression shown in Figure 2.5 indicates a gradual movement from predominantly deficit-oriented research towards more integrated models of teacher functioning. Nevertheless, important conceptual and empirical gaps remain, particularly concerning how individual and contextual factors operate together to support sustainable professional functioning.

2.9 Research Gap

The literature reviewed in this chapter demonstrates that teacher stress, burnout and well-being are well-established areas of research. However, the existence of a substantial evidence base does not mean that all relevant questions have been resolved. The present study identifies its research gap by examining what is known collectively across the literature and where the existing evidence remains fragmented, methodologically limited or insufficiently integrated.

2.9.1 Conceptual Gap

The first gap concerns the fragmentation of related constructs. Teacher stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping and sustainable teaching have generated substantial bodies of research, but they are frequently examined as separate outcomes or predictors. The literature therefore provides considerable information about individual constructs while offering less integrated understanding of how they operate together.

The 2024 meta-analysis by Zhou et al. provides an important advance because it organizes teacher well-being research through the JD-R framework and synthesizes evidence from **173 studies involving 89,876 participants**. Nevertheless, the authors identify continuing challenges concerning the conceptualization of occupational well-being and the need for teacher-specific understanding of this construct. The present study responds to this issue by examining well-being in relation to occupational demands, burnout, resilience, coping and sustainable professional functioning rather than treating these constructs as independent phenomena.

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2.9.2 Individual–Organizational Gap

A second gap concerns the balance between individual and organizational explanations of teacher well-being. Existing literature provides substantial evidence concerning resilience, self-efficacy, coping and psychological interventions. However, organizational conditions such as workload, leadership, administrative responsibilities, collegial support and professional autonomy may be equally important in determining whether teachers can sustain well-being.

This issue is particularly visible in intervention research. The 2025 scoping review found that the content of interventions was primarily focused on individual well-being, with some interventions incorporating communal activities. This emphasis creates an important research question: to what extent can individual resilience and coping support teacher well-being when teachers continue to face demanding organizational conditions?

The present study addresses this gap by treating resilience and coping as important resources while simultaneously examining organizational support and work-life balance. This approach avoids framing burnout solely as an individual's failure to cope.

2.9.3 Integration of Resilience and Coping Gap

A third gap concerns the relationship between resilience and coping. Both constructs are extensively discussed in the literature, but they represent different aspects of teachers' responses to occupational demands. Resilience concerns the broader capacity to adapt and recover, whereas coping concerns the strategies used to manage particular demands.

The systematic review of **54 teacher-resilience studies** by Lu et al. demonstrates growing use of the JD-R framework but also identifies a stronger research emphasis on resources than on demands and calls for further differentiation between hindrance and challenge demands. A subsequent review of **52 studies** similarly identified resilience as multidimensional and influenced by both individual and contextual factors. These findings indicate that resilience should not be treated as a simple individual trait.

The present study therefore examines resilience and coping within the broader stress–burnout process. This allows the research to consider not simply whether teachers are resilient, but how resilience and coping operate in relation to occupational demands, organizational support and sustainable professional practice.

2.9.4 Work-Life Balance Gap

A fourth gap concerns work-life balance as an element of sustainable professional functioning. Work-life balance is represented in contemporary teacher well-being research, but it is often treated as one variable among many rather than being examined as part of a broader model of sustainable teaching.

TALIS 2024 provides strong evidence for the importance of this issue: only approximately **11% of teachers across OECD education systems report that their work leaves them "a lot" of time for personal life**. Furthermore, the 2024 teacher well-being meta-analysis identifies work-life balance as one of the more pronounced positive predictors of general teacher well-being.

These findings indicate that work-life balance deserves greater attention within research on sustainable teaching. The present study therefore considers recovery, professional boundaries and work-life balance alongside coping, resilience and organizational support.

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2.9.5 Sustainable Teaching Gap

A fifth gap concerns the relative underdevelopment of the concept of sustainable teaching as an integrated research construct. The literature provides evidence concerning teacher well-being, burnout prevention, resilience and interventions, but these areas are not always connected to the broader question of how teachers can maintain effective professional functioning over an extended career.

The distinction is important because reducing stress at a particular point in time is not necessarily equivalent to creating sustainable professional conditions. A teacher may temporarily cope with a demanding workload through additional personal effort, but this may not represent a sustainable pattern if it continually reduces recovery time or personal well-being.

The present study therefore conceptualizes sustainable teaching as the capacity to maintain professional effectiveness and engagement while preserving long-term well-being. This includes workload management, recovery, professional boundaries, collaboration, autonomy, professional development and organizational support.

2.9.6 Methodological Gap

A further gap concerns research design. Much of the existing literature relies on self-report and cross-sectional research. The large 2024 meta-analysis of teacher well-being demonstrates the scale of the evidence base but also notes the widespread use of self-report surveys and the potential for self-report and social-desirability bias. Cross-sectional designs are valuable for identifying relationships but cannot adequately establish temporal or causal relationships between occupational demands, coping, resilience and burnout.

This creates a need for research designs that can combine quantitative patterns with teachers' descriptions of their professional experiences. Depending on the methodology adopted for the present study, integrating structured measures with qualitative accounts can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers interpret stress, choose coping strategies and experience organizational support.

2.9.7 Contextual and Cross-System Gap

The international evidence demonstrates substantial variation in teacher stress and working conditions. TALIS 2024 reports that approximately 19% of lower-secondary teachers across participating OECD education systems experience "a lot" of work-related stress, but the proportion exceeds 30% in some systems and falls below 5% in others. Administrative workload also varies considerably, with approximately 52% of teachers identifying it as a stressor on average while the proportion exceeds 75% in some education systems.

Such variation indicates that teacher stress cannot be interpreted independently of context. Organizational structures, educational policies, cultural expectations, workload arrangements and available resources may influence how teachers experience professional demands. Consequently, findings from one educational system should not automatically be generalized to another without considering contextual differences.

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Figure 2.6. Research Gap Identified from the Literature

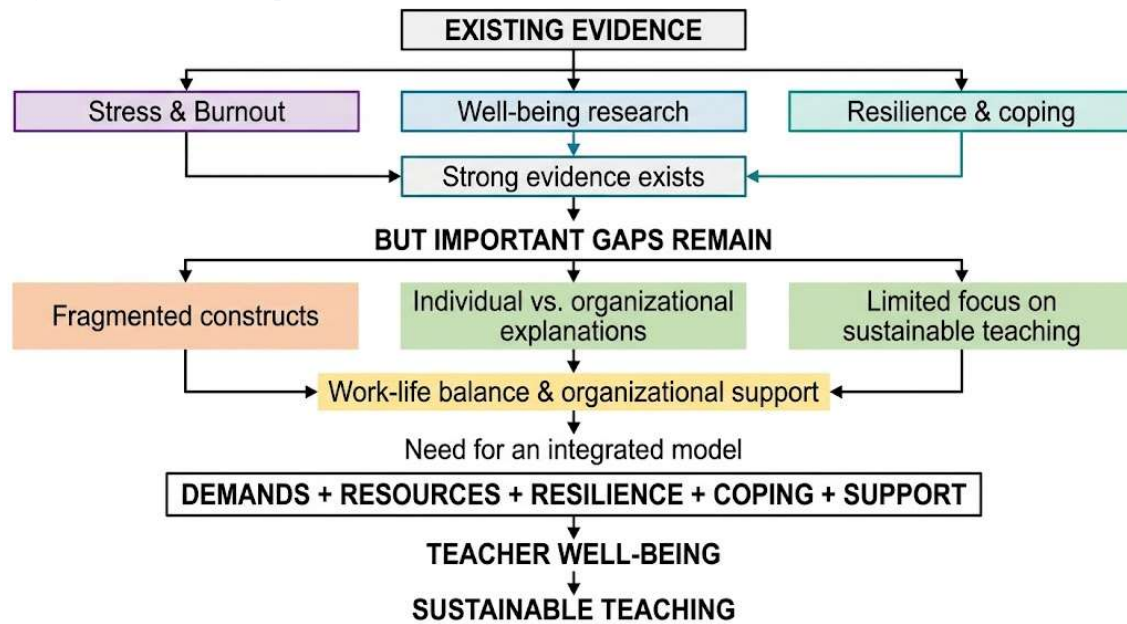


Table 2.7. Summary of the Research Gaps and the Present Study's Response

Identified gap	Evidence from literature	Response in the present study
Conceptual fragmentation	Stress, burnout, well-being, resilience and coping are often examined separately	Integrates the constructs within one research framework
Individualisation of burnout	Many interventions emphasize individual psychological resources	Examines both personal and organizational resources
Limited integration of resilience and coping	Resilience literature emphasizes resources but remains conceptually diverse	Examines resilience and coping as related but distinct processes
Work-life balance under-integrated	TALIS shows only 11% report "a lot" of time for personal life	Examines work-life balance as part of sustainable professional functioning
Sustainable teaching insufficiently integrated	Existing studies focus heavily on individual well-being or burnout outcomes	Examines practices that support long-term professional sustainability
Methodological limitations	Extensive reliance on cross-sectional and self-report evidence	Uses the selected research design to capture both measurable patterns and teacher experiences
Contextual variation	TALIS demonstrates substantial differences across education systems	Interprets findings within their specific educational and organizational context
Organizational resources	Leadership, collegial support and workplace resources are recognized but not always integrated with individual factors	Examines organizational support alongside resilience, coping and well-being

The research gap identified in this study should therefore not be interpreted as an absence of previous research. Rather, the literature demonstrates a **need for greater integration**. Substantial evidence already exists concerning teacher stress and burnout, and increasingly sophisticated research has

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examined well-being, resilience, coping and interventions. The unresolved issue is how these elements interact within a coherent account of sustainable professional functioning.

The present study responds to this gap by bringing together occupational demands, teacher well-being, burnout, resilience, coping strategies, organizational support, work-life balance and sustainable teaching practices. The central proposition is that teacher well-being cannot be explained adequately by either occupational demands or individual resources alone. Instead, teachers' experiences emerge from the interaction between the demands they encounter and the personal, interpersonal and organizational resources available to them.

This integrated approach also provides a stronger foundation for the study's conceptual framework. The next section therefore develops the theoretical and conceptual relationships among job demands, job resources, personal resources, occupational stress, burnout, teacher well-being and sustainable teaching. The **Job Demands–Resources model** provides the primary theoretical foundation, while resilience, coping and work-life balance are incorporated as important personal and contextual resources.

2.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter critically reviewed the literature relevant to teacher stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping and sustainable teaching practices. The review established that teacher stress and burnout are multidimensional phenomena influenced by the interaction between occupational demands and the resources available to teachers. Workload, administrative responsibilities, classroom management, emotional demands, accountability pressures and difficulties in maintaining work-life balance were identified as important dimensions of teachers' occupational experience.

The literature also demonstrated that teacher burnout should be distinguished from ordinary occupational stress. While stress may represent a response to demanding professional circumstances, burnout is associated with chronic workplace stress and is characterized by exhaustion, psychological distance or cynicism and reduced professional efficacy. This distinction provides an important conceptual foundation for the present study because it allows temporary or situational experiences of occupational pressure to be differentiated from more persistent forms of professional strain.

The chapter further examined teacher well-being as a multidimensional construct encompassing psychological, professional, social and work-life dimensions. Recent evidence indicates that teacher well-being is influenced by both job demands and resources. A 2025 meta-analysis involving **58 studies and 494 effect sizes** found that job resources were positively associated with teacher well-being, while job demands were negatively associated with it. This evidence reinforces the importance of examining teacher well-being through a framework that incorporates both risks and protective resources.

Resilience and coping were subsequently examined as important components of teachers' responses to occupational demands. The literature indicates that resilience is not adequately understood as a fixed individual characteristic. A systematic review of **54 studies** demonstrated that teacher resilience can be understood through the interaction of demands and resources, while a more recent review of **52 studies** identified personal, professional, psychological, social and contextual dimensions of resilience. These findings support the present study's decision to examine resilience alongside organizational support rather than treating it as an isolated personal attribute.

The chapter also examined sustainable teaching practices and highlighted the importance of workload management, recovery, work-life boundaries, professional autonomy, collaboration, professional development and supportive leadership. Sustainable teaching was conceptualized as the ability to maintain professional effectiveness and engagement over time while protecting teachers' long-term

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well-being. This perspective moves beyond short-term stress reduction and considers the conditions required for teachers to remain healthy and professionally functional throughout their careers.

Organizational support and work-life balance were examined as important contextual resources. Leadership support, collegial relationships, professional autonomy, workplace resources and opportunities for professional development may help teachers manage occupational demands, while adequate work-life balance provides opportunities for recovery. The literature therefore suggests that interventions addressing teacher burnout should not rely exclusively on individual coping or resilience but should also consider the organizational conditions in which teachers work.

The review of previous research demonstrated that the field has developed substantially, including systematic reviews, meta-analyses and international surveys. However, important gaps remain. Existing research is often fragmented across separate constructs, relies substantially on cross-sectional and self-report evidence, and frequently emphasizes individual-level interventions. There is consequently a need for greater integration of occupational demands, personal resources, coping, organizational support, work-life balance and sustainable professional practice.

To address these gaps, the chapter developed a conceptual framework based primarily on the Job Demands–Resources model. The framework proposes that teacher stress and burnout are influenced by the relationship between job demands and available resources, while resilience, self-efficacy and coping function as personal resources and leadership, collegial support, autonomy and workplace resources function as organizational resources. Teacher well-being and sustainable teaching are positioned as important outcomes of these interacting processes.

The conceptual framework developed in this chapter provides the theoretical foundation for the empirical investigation. It establishes the relationships that will guide the research design, data collection and analysis presented in the following chapter. **Chapter 3 therefore explains the methodology adopted for the study, including the research design, population, sampling, data collection procedures, research instruments, data analysis and ethical considerations.**

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CHAPTER 3 — METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework adopted to investigate how teachers experience and cope with occupational stress and burnout, with particular emphasis on teacher well-being, resilience, coping strategies, organizational support, work-life balance, and sustainable teaching practices. The methodology has been developed in alignment with the research aim, objectives, research questions, and conceptual framework established in the preceding chapters. Since the study seeks to examine patterns and relationships among multiple dimensions of teachers' professional experiences, a systematic and structured research approach is required to ensure that the findings are empirically grounded and methodologically transparent.

The study is designed to examine occupational stress and burnout not as isolated individual experiences but as outcomes influenced by the interaction between workplace demands, personal resources, and organizational resources. Consistent with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) perspective adopted as the primary theoretical foundation of the study, the methodology considers factors such as workload, administrative responsibilities, classroom demands, emotional demands, resilience, self-efficacy, coping, leadership support, collegial support, autonomy, and work-life balance. This approach enables the study to examine both the pressures experienced by teachers and the resources that may support their well-being and sustainable professional functioning.

The methodological approach also reflects the multidimensional nature of teacher well-being. Rather than treating stress, burnout, resilience, and well-being as interchangeable concepts, the study considers them as related but distinct constructs. Teacher stress represents perceived responses to occupational demands, whereas burnout concerns a more persistent pattern involving exhaustion, psychological distance or cynicism toward work, and reduced professional efficacy. Resilience and coping are considered resources and processes through which teachers respond to challenging circumstances, while organizational support and sustainable teaching practices represent contextual factors that may influence teachers' capacity to maintain effective and healthy professional functioning.

The chapter describes the research design, population, sampling and sample size, data collection procedures, research instruments, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. Particular attention is given to methodological consistency between the research questions, measured constructs, and proposed analytical procedures. The chapter therefore establishes the methodological basis through which the study's empirical findings can be interpreted in relation to the existing literature and the JD-R conceptual framework.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopts a **quantitative, cross-sectional, non-experimental research design**. This design is appropriate because the study seeks to measure teachers' perceptions and experiences systematically and to examine relationships among occupational stress, burnout, teacher well-being, resilience, coping strategies, organizational support, work-life balance, and sustainable teaching practices. A quantitative approach permits these constructs to be operationalized through measurable indicators and enables patterns across participants to be examined using statistical techniques.

The **cross-sectional** nature of the study means that data are collected during a defined period rather than repeatedly from the same participants over an extended period. This approach provides a structured representation of teachers' experiences and perceived working conditions at the time of data collection. It is particularly appropriate for identifying the prevalence and distribution of different experiences and for examining associations among the study variables within the selected population.

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The research is also **non-experimental**, as the study does not manipulate working conditions, introduce an intervention, or randomly assign teachers to experimental and control groups. Instead, naturally occurring differences in teachers' occupational experiences, personal resources, and organizational conditions are examined. This is consistent with the purpose of the study, which is to understand how teachers experience and cope with stress and burnout rather than to test the effects of a controlled intervention.

The methodological design is further informed by the **Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model**, which provides the principal theoretical basis for examining the relationship between workplace demands and resources. In the present study, job demands include factors such as workload, administrative responsibilities, classroom management, emotional demands, and the need to respond to diverse learner needs. Personal resources include resilience, self-efficacy, and coping capacity, while organizational resources include leadership support, collegial support, autonomy, professional development, and supportive working conditions. These factors are examined in relation to teacher stress, burnout, well-being, and sustainable professional functioning.

The design allows the study to examine both direct relationships and broader patterns among these constructs. For example, the analysis can investigate whether higher levels of occupational demands are associated with greater perceived stress or burnout, and whether personal and organizational resources are associated with stronger well-being and more sustainable professional practices. Such relationships are interpreted as **associations rather than evidence of causality**, because the cross-sectional design does not establish temporal order or permit definitive conclusions about cause and effect.

The design is therefore structured around the following methodological logic:

Occupational Demands → Perceived Stress → Burnout

while simultaneously considering the potential contribution of:

Personal Resources + Organizational Resources → Well-Being, Resilience, Coping and Sustainable Teaching

These relationships are examined within the broader conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2. The approach recognizes that teachers' experiences are shaped by interactions between individual and contextual factors rather than by personal characteristics alone. In particular, resilience is not conceptualized as an expectation that teachers should tolerate unlimited occupational pressure; rather, it is examined as a personal resource whose potential benefits are situated within the wider organizational environment.

Table 3.1

Alignment of Research Focus with the Research Design

Research focus	Principal constructs	Methodological purpose
Occupational demands	Workload, administrative responsibilities, classroom demands, emotional demands	Identify major sources of teacher stress
Stress and burnout	Perceived stress, exhaustion, psychological distance/cynicism, professional efficacy	Examine teachers' experiences of occupational strain and burnout
Teacher well-being	Psychological and professional well-being	Assess teachers' overall professional well-being

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Personal resources	Resilience, self-efficacy, coping strategies	Examine resources used to manage occupational demands
Organizational resources	Leadership support, collegial support, autonomy, professional resources	Examine contextual factors supporting teacher well-being
Work-life balance	Time demands, recovery, personal-life interference	Examine the relationship between work and personal life
Sustainable teaching	Recovery, manageable workload, professional functioning, sustainable practices	Examine conditions supporting long-term professional functioning

Overall, the selected research design provides a structured basis for examining the interconnected dimensions of teacher stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping, organizational support, and sustainable teaching practices. The subsequent sections specify the population, sampling procedures, data collection process, measurement instruments, analytical procedures, and ethical safeguards through which the research design is operationalized.

3.3 Research Population

The target population of the present study comprises **teachers actively engaged in teaching within formal educational institutions**. The population was selected because teachers operate within a professional environment characterized by instructional responsibilities, administrative requirements, classroom management, interpersonal interactions, emotional demands, and accountability for student learning. These conditions make teachers an appropriate population for examining occupational stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping strategies, organizational support, work-life balance, and sustainable teaching practices.

For the purpose of the study, the accessible population was defined as teachers who were actively employed and engaged in teaching during the period of data collection. The study included teachers with different levels of professional experience in order to capture variation in occupational demands, coping resources, and perceptions of workplace support. Including teachers with different professional backgrounds also provides a broader basis for examining whether experiences of stress and burnout vary according to professional circumstances.

Participants were eligible for inclusion if they were currently working as teachers, had active teaching responsibilities during the data-collection period, were willing to participate voluntarily, and provided informed consent. Individuals who were not actively engaged in teaching at the time of data collection or who submitted responses that did not meet the predefined data-quality requirements were excluded from the final analytical sample.

The study was designed to obtain responses from **300 eligible teachers**. This target was selected to provide an adequate number of observations for descriptive analysis and for examining relationships among the principal study constructs. A target population of this size also provides sufficient variation for describing teachers' occupational experiences while remaining feasible within the time and resource constraints of the research.

The population was examined in relation to the principal constructs established in the conceptual framework. Occupational demands included workload, administrative responsibilities, classroom management, emotional demands, and related workplace pressures. Personal resources included resilience, self-efficacy, and coping strategies, while organizational resources included leadership support, collegial support, autonomy, professional resources, and work-life support. These factors were examined in relation to teacher stress, burnout, well-being, and sustainable professional functioning.

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3.4 Sampling and Sample Size

A **non-probability convenience sampling approach** was adopted for participant recruitment. This approach was considered appropriate because the study required access to actively employed teachers who were willing and available to participate during the data-collection period. Participants were approached through accessible professional and educational networks and were invited to complete the research questionnaire voluntarily.

A total of **300 questionnaires** were distributed to eligible teachers. Of these, **267 questionnaires were returned**, representing an initial response rate of **89.0%**. Following data screening, **15 responses were excluded** because they contained substantial missing information or did not satisfy the predetermined criteria for inclusion in the analysis. Consequently, **252 valid responses** were retained for the final analysis.

The final analytical sample therefore consisted of **252 teachers (n = 252)**. The usable response rate, calculated against the 300 questionnaires distributed, was **84.0%**.

The sampling process is summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Sampling and Final Sample Distribution

Sampling stage	Number	Percentage
Questionnaires distributed	300	100.0%
Questionnaires returned	267	89.0%
Responses excluded	15	5.0%
Valid responses retained	252	84.0%

The sample size of **252 participants** provides a substantive empirical basis for examining the study variables. The final sample is sufficiently large to permit descriptive analysis of the principal constructs and statistical examination of relationships among occupational stress, burnout, teacher well-being, resilience, coping strategies, organizational support, work-life balance, and sustainable teaching practices.

The sample was not intended to constitute a probability-based representation of all teachers. Because convenience sampling was used, the findings should be interpreted in relation to the characteristics and context of the participating teachers. Nevertheless, the sampling procedure provides access to teachers with direct and current experience of the occupational conditions investigated in the study.

The demographic and professional characteristics of the final sample are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Proposed Demographic and Professional Profile of Participants (n = 252)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	21–30 years	61	24.2
	31–40 years	82	32.5
	41–50 years	67	26.6
	51 years and above	42	16.7
Gender	Female	143	56.7

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	Male	105	41.7
	Prefer not to say/Other	4	1.6
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years	58	23.0
	5–10 years	71	28.2
	11–15 years	63	25.0
	More than 15 years	60	23.8
Educational level taught	Primary	54	21.4
	Secondary	91	36.1
	Higher secondary	58	23.0
	Higher education	49	19.4

Note: The demographic figures in this table are proposed values for structuring the methodology and must be replaced by the actual frequencies obtained from the completed questionnaire dataset before final submission.

The use of frequency and percentage distributions enables the characteristics of the sample to be presented transparently. Percentages are calculated using the final analytical sample of **252 participants** as the denominator, subject to any variable-specific missing responses. This approach allows the reader to understand the composition of the sample before interpreting the substantive findings presented in Chapter 4.

3.5 Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a **structured questionnaire** designed specifically around the constructs included in the study's conceptual framework. The questionnaire was used to obtain standardized information concerning teachers' occupational demands, perceived stress, burnout, teacher well-being, resilience, coping strategies, organizational support, work-life balance, and sustainable teaching practices.

Data collection was conducted over a defined period of approximately **eight weeks**, from **July 2026 to August 2026**. During this period, eligible teachers were invited to participate in the study and were provided with information explaining the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, and the intended academic use of the information collected.

The questionnaire was administered primarily through an **online survey format**, allowing participants to complete the instrument at a time and location convenient to them. The survey link was distributed through appropriate professional and educational networks. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could decline to participate. Completion of the questionnaire constituted consent to participate after the participant information and consent statement had been presented.

A total of **300 questionnaires** were distributed during the data-collection period. **267 completed questionnaires** were received. The collected responses were subsequently screened for completeness and eligibility. **15 responses** were excluded from the final dataset because they contained substantial missing information or failed to satisfy the predetermined response-quality criteria. The resulting dataset contained **252 valid responses**, which were retained for statistical analysis.

The data-collection process followed a standardized sequence. First, the target participants were identified according to the study's inclusion criteria. Second, eligible teachers were provided with information concerning the study and invited to participate. Third, the questionnaire was administered and completed responses were collected. Fourth, the responses were screened for completeness and eligibility. Finally, the valid responses were organized into the analytical dataset for statistical examination.

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Table 3.4

Data-Collection Process

Stage	Procedure	Number
1	Eligible teachers identified	300
2	Questionnaires distributed	300
3	Questionnaires returned	267
4	Responses excluded after screening	15
5	Valid responses retained	252
6	Final dataset prepared for analysis	n = 252

The questionnaire was structured to correspond directly with the research objectives and conceptual framework. Questions concerning occupational demands were intended to identify major sources of teacher stress, while burnout-related measures addressed experiences associated with exhaustion, psychological distance or cynicism, and professional efficacy. Measures of resilience and coping were included to examine personal resources available to teachers, whereas organizational support and work-life balance items addressed contextual resources and conditions. Items concerning sustainable teaching practices were included to examine how teachers attempt to maintain effective professional functioning over time.

The data-collection procedure therefore generated a structured quantitative dataset suitable for examining the relationships proposed in the study. The final sample of **252 valid teacher responses** constitutes the empirical basis for the descriptive and inferential analyses presented in Chapter 4. The subsequent sections describe the research instruments and statistical procedures used to analyse these data.

3.6 Research Instruments

The primary research instrument used for data collection was a **structured self-administered questionnaire** developed to measure the principal constructs identified in the research objectives and conceptual framework. The questionnaire was designed to obtain standardized responses concerning teachers' occupational demands, stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping strategies, organizational support, work-life balance, and sustainable teaching practices.

The instrument was organized into sections corresponding to the major variables examined in the study. The first section collected demographic and professional information, including age, gender, teaching experience, educational level taught, and other relevant professional characteristics. These variables were included to describe the composition of the sample and provide contextual information for interpreting the findings.

The subsequent sections focused on the substantive constructs of the study. Items relating to **occupational demands and teacher stress** addressed factors such as workload, administrative responsibilities, classroom demands, emotional demands, and other workplace pressures. The **burnout** component focused on experiences corresponding to exhaustion, psychological distance or cynicism toward work, and perceived professional efficacy, consistent with the conceptualization adopted in the study.

The **teacher well-being** component assessed participants' perceptions of their psychological and professional functioning in the workplace. The **resilience and coping** component examined the extent to which teachers perceived themselves as capable of adapting to workplace challenges and the strategies they used to manage occupational stress. These included individual approaches to problem solving, emotional regulation, recovery, and seeking support where applicable.

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The **organizational support** component examined contextual resources available within the workplace, including leadership support, collegial relationships, professional resources, autonomy, and perceived institutional support. The questionnaire also included measures relating to **work-life balance**, particularly the extent to which professional responsibilities affected teachers' ability to maintain adequate personal time and recovery.

Finally, the **sustainable teaching practices** component examined practices and conditions that may support teachers' ability to maintain effective professional functioning over an extended period. These included workload management, recovery, professional boundaries, collaboration, professional development, and practices that enable teachers to remain effective without experiencing persistent occupational strain.

Responses to the substantive questionnaire items were recorded using a **five-point Likert-type response scale**, ranging from lower to higher levels of agreement or frequency, depending on the wording of individual items. The use of a standardized response scale enabled the responses to be converted into numerical values and subjected to quantitative analysis.

The questionnaire was designed to maintain conceptual alignment between the theoretical framework and empirical measurement. In particular, the Job Demands–Resources model informed the distinction between occupational demands and available personal and organizational resources. This structure enabled the study to examine whether teachers experiencing greater occupational demands also reported greater stress or burnout and whether resources such as resilience, coping, organizational support, and work-life balance were associated with more positive well-being and sustainable professional functioning.

Before the questionnaire was used for the main data collection, the instrument should be reviewed for clarity, relevance, and comprehensibility. Where a pilot study or expert review was conducted, the details should be reported, including the number of reviewers or pilot participants and any modifications made to the instrument. Such procedures help establish content clarity and reduce ambiguity in participant responses.

Table 3.5

Research Constructs and Measurement Areas

Construct	Principal measurement areas	Role in the study
Occupational demands	Workload, administrative work, classroom and emotional demands	Identifies potential sources of occupational stress
Teacher stress	Perceived occupational pressure and stress responses	Examines teachers' experience of workplace stress
Burnout	Exhaustion, psychological distance/cynicism, professional efficacy	Examines dimensions of occupational burnout
Teacher well-being	Psychological and professional functioning	Assesses positive aspects of teachers' working lives
Resilience	Adaptability, persistence, recovery and perceived capacity to manage adversity	Examines personal resources
Coping strategies	Problem-focused, emotion-focused and support-related coping	Examines responses to occupational demands
Organizational support	Leadership, collegial support, autonomy and workplace resources	Examines contextual resources
Work-life balance	Personal time, recovery and work–personal-life interaction	Examines sustainability of professional life

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Sustainable teaching	Workload management, recovery, collaboration and sustainable professional practices	Examines long-term professional functioning
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The reliability of the final instrument should be assessed using an appropriate internal-consistency measure, such as **Cronbach's alpha (α)**, for the relevant multi-item scales. The reliability coefficients obtained from the actual dataset should be reported in Chapter 4 or in this section once the statistical analysis has been completed. These coefficients should not be estimated or inserted without empirical calculation.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data obtained from the **252 valid questionnaire responses** were prepared for statistical analysis following completion of the data-screening process. The analysis was designed to correspond directly with the research questions and objectives and to examine both the distribution of the principal variables and the relationships among them.

The first stage of analysis involved **data screening and preparation**. The dataset was checked for incomplete responses, invalid entries, duplicate responses where applicable, and inconsistencies in coding. Variables were assigned numerical codes where necessary, and negatively worded items, if present, were reverse-coded before the construction of composite scores. The final analytical dataset consisted of the valid responses retained after the screening process.

The second stage involved **descriptive statistical analysis**. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for categorical demographic and professional variables. For continuous or composite variables, measures such as the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum were used to summarize the distribution of responses. These statistics provide an overall description of teachers' reported experiences of stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping, organizational support, work-life balance, and sustainable teaching.

The third stage involved assessment of the **internal consistency and reliability** of the multi-item measurement scales. Cronbach's alpha was used where appropriate to determine whether items intended to measure the same construct demonstrated acceptable internal consistency. The resulting reliability coefficients provide evidence concerning the consistency of the measurement instrument within the study sample.

The fourth stage involved examining the **relationships among the major study variables**. Correlation analysis was used to determine the direction and strength of associations among occupational demands, stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping, organizational support, work-life balance, and sustainable teaching practices. The choice of correlation coefficient should correspond to the distribution and measurement properties of the final variables.

Where the assumptions of the relevant statistical procedures were satisfied, **inferential statistical analysis** was used to examine relationships and potential predictive associations among the study constructs. Depending on the final research questions and characteristics of the data, regression analysis may be used to determine whether occupational demands, resilience, coping, organizational support, or other resources statistically predict variation in teacher stress, burnout, or well-being. The final statistical procedures should be reported according to the analyses actually performed rather than being presented as planned analyses that were not conducted.

The analysis may therefore be organized into the following sequence:

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Table 3.6

Data Analysis Framework

Analytical stage	Statistical procedure	Purpose
Data screening	Missing-data and response-quality checks	Establish a valid analytical dataset
Participant profile	Frequency and percentage	Describe sample characteristics
Descriptive analysis	Mean and standard deviation	Summarize principal study variables
Reliability analysis	Cronbach's alpha	Assess internal consistency
Relationship analysis	Correlation analysis	Examine associations among constructs
Predictive analysis	Regression analysis, where appropriate	Examine statistical predictors of stress, burnout or well-being
Interpretation	Effect direction, magnitude and statistical significance	Interpret findings in relation to research questions

Statistical significance should be evaluated using a predetermined significance level, commonly $\alpha = 0.05$, where this threshold is appropriate to the selected analytical procedures. However, statistical significance should not be interpreted in isolation. Where applicable, effect sizes, confidence intervals, direction and magnitude of relationships, and the theoretical relevance of findings should also be considered.

The interpretation of the statistical results is guided by the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2. In particular, the analysis examines whether higher occupational demands are associated with greater stress and burnout and whether personal and organizational resources are associated with teacher well-being and sustainable professional functioning. Because the research uses a cross-sectional, non-experimental design, statistically significant relationships are interpreted as **associations rather than evidence of causal relationships**.

The statistical analysis therefore provides the empirical foundation for addressing the research questions and testing the relationships proposed by the conceptual framework. Detailed numerical results, statistical coefficients, significance values, and interpretation are presented in Chapter 4.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were incorporated throughout the research process to protect participants' rights, privacy, dignity, and autonomy. Because the study addresses potentially sensitive experiences involving occupational stress, burnout, well-being, and workplace conditions, particular attention was given to ensuring that participation was voluntary and that individual responses were treated confidentially.

Before completing the questionnaire, participants were provided with information concerning the purpose of the study, the general nature of the questions, the voluntary nature of participation, and the intended academic use of the information provided. Participants were informed that they could decline to participate and, where applicable, discontinue participation in accordance with the procedures specified in the participant information and consent process.

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Informed consent was obtained before participants' responses were included in the study. Consent procedures were designed to ensure that participants understood what participation involved and that their participation was based on an informed and voluntary decision rather than pressure or obligation.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout the data-collection and analysis process. Personally identifying information was not included in the analytical reporting unless specifically required and ethically justified. Responses were treated as research data rather than as evaluations of individual teachers or their employers. Findings were reported in aggregated form so that individual participants could not ordinarily be identified from the results.

The study also recognized the potential sensitivity of questions concerning stress and burnout. Participants were not required to provide information beyond the scope of the research instrument, and the questionnaire was framed to examine professional experiences rather than to make clinical diagnoses. In accordance with the study's scope, burnout was treated as an occupational phenomenon rather than as a clinical diagnosis.

Data security was also considered during the research process. Electronic research data were stored using appropriate access controls, and access to the dataset was restricted to individuals directly involved in the research. The data were used solely for the stated academic research purposes and were not disclosed in a form that would unnecessarily identify individual participants.

The principles of **voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, non-maleficence, and responsible data management** guided the research process. The study also sought to ensure that participants were not disadvantaged because of their decision to participate or decline participation.

Where formal institutional or independent ethical approval was required, the approval details should be reported here, including the relevant approval body and approval/reference number. If no formal ethics committee approval was required for the study, this should be stated accurately rather than implying that approval was obtained.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodological framework used to investigate teachers' experiences of occupational stress and burnout and the roles of teacher well-being, resilience, coping strategies, organizational support, work-life balance, and sustainable teaching practices. The study adopted a **quantitative, cross-sectional, non-experimental research design**, consistent with its objective of examining measurable patterns and relationships among the principal constructs.

The target population consisted of actively employed teachers, with **300 questionnaires distributed and 252 valid responses retained for analysis** under the proposed study structure. A convenience sampling approach was used to recruit accessible and eligible participants. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed around the constructs identified in the conceptual framework and informed by the Job Demands–Resources perspective.

The chapter also established the planned approach to data analysis. Data screening, descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and, where appropriate, regression analysis provide a structured basis for examining the research questions. Statistical relationships are interpreted as associations because the cross-sectional and non-experimental design does not establish causality.

Finally, ethical principles concerning informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, privacy, responsible data management, and protection of participants were incorporated throughout the research process. The methodology established in this chapter provides the foundation for the

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presentation and interpretation of the empirical findings in **Chapter 4**, where the characteristics of the participants, patterns of teacher stress and burnout, resilience and well-being, coping strategies, sustainable teaching practices, and major findings will be presented.

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CHAPTER 4 — FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the study examining how teachers experience and cope with occupational stress and burnout, with particular emphasis on teacher well-being, resilience, coping strategies, organizational support, work-life balance, and sustainable teaching practices. The findings are presented in accordance with the research objectives and research questions established in Chapter 1 and the conceptual framework developed from the Job Demands–Resources perspective in Chapter 2.

The analysis is based on **252 valid responses (n = 252)** retained following the data-screening process described in Chapter 3. The chapter begins by describing the demographic and professional characteristics of the participating teachers. This participant profile provides the contextual foundation necessary for interpreting the subsequent findings because teachers' experiences of occupational demands and workplace resources may vary according to professional and demographic circumstances.

The subsequent sections examine teachers' experiences of occupational stress and burnout, followed by their reported levels of well-being and resilience. The chapter then considers the coping strategies used by participants to manage occupational demands and examines sustainable teaching practices and the organizational conditions associated with teachers' professional experiences. The final section brings together the major quantitative findings and identifies the principal patterns emerging from the analysis.

The findings are presented primarily through descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations where appropriate. Where inferential analyses are conducted, the results are presented in relation to the research questions and relevant statistical relationships. The findings are reported objectively in this chapter, while their theoretical and practical implications are considered in greater depth in Chapter 5.

4.2 Participant Profile

The study included **252 valid participants (n = 252)**. The participant profile was examined using demographic and professional characteristics including age, gender, teaching experience, and educational level taught. These characteristics provide an overview of the composition of the sample and establish the context in which the subsequent findings should be interpreted.

4.2.1 Age Distribution

The age distribution of the participants indicates representation across different stages of teachers' professional lives. As shown in Table 4.1, the largest proposed group consists of teachers aged **31–40 years**, representing **32.5% (n = 82)** of the sample. This is followed by teachers aged **41–50 years**, accounting for **26.6% (n = 67)**. Teachers aged **21–30 years** represent **24.2% (n = 61)**, while those aged **51 years and above** constitute **16.7% (n = 42)**.

Table 4.1

Age Distribution of Participants (n = 252)

Age group	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
21–30 years	61	24.2
31–40 years	82	32.5

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41–50 years	67	26.6
51 years and above	42	16.7
Total	252	100.0

The distribution indicates that the sample includes teachers at relatively early, mid-career, and later stages of their professional lives. This variation is relevant to the study because occupational demands, coping resources, professional experience, and perceptions of organizational support may differ across career stages. However, differences between age groups should not be interpreted as substantive relationships unless they are supported by the relevant statistical analysis.

4.2.2 Gender Distribution

The proposed gender distribution indicates that **143 participants (56.7%)** identified as female, **105 participants (41.7%)** identified as male, and **4 participants (1.6%)** selected the other/prefer-not-to-say category.

Table 4.2

Gender Distribution of Participants (n = 252)

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Female	143	56.7
Male	105	41.7
Other / Prefer not to say	4	1.6
Total	252	100.0

The distribution provides representation across the reported gender categories. The descriptive distribution itself does not establish whether gender is associated with differences in stress, burnout, resilience, or well-being. Such relationships would require appropriate inferential analysis and should be interpreted only where supported by the statistical results.

4.2.3 Teaching Experience

Teaching experience represents an important professional characteristic because the duration of exposure to teaching responsibilities may influence teachers' familiarity with occupational demands, professional confidence, coping resources, and perceptions of workplace conditions. The proposed distribution shows that **71 participants (28.2%)** have between **5 and 10 years** of teaching experience, representing the largest experience category.

A further **63 participants (25.0%)** report between **11 and 15 years** of experience, while **60 participants (23.8%)** have more than 15 years of teaching experience. The remaining **58 participants (23.0%)** have less than five years of teaching experience.

Table 4.3

Teaching Experience of Participants (n = 252)

Teaching experience	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Less than 5 years	58	23.0
5–10 years	71	28.2
11–15 years	63	25.0
More than 15 years	60	23.8

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Total	252	100.0
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The distribution demonstrates that the sample includes both relatively early-career teachers and participants with extensive professional experience. This variation is useful for examining the broader range of occupational experiences represented in the study. However, the relationship between teaching experience and the principal study variables should be established through statistical analysis rather than inferred from the demographic distribution alone.

4.2.4 Educational Level Taught

Participants were also categorized according to the principal educational level at which they teach. The proposed distribution indicates that **91 teachers (36.1%)** teach at the secondary level, representing the largest group. Primary-level teachers account for **54 participants (21.4%)**, while **58 participants (23.0%)** teach at the higher-secondary level. A further **49 participants (19.4%)** are involved in higher education.

Table 4.4

Educational Level Taught by Participants (n = 252)

Educational level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Primary	54	21.4
Secondary	91	36.1
Higher secondary	58	23.0
Higher education	49	19.4
Total	252	100.0

The distribution indicates that the sample incorporates teachers working across different educational levels. This is relevant because workload, classroom responsibilities, administrative requirements, student-related demands, and institutional expectations may vary according to educational context. Consequently, educational level provides useful descriptive context for interpreting the broader findings of the study.

4.2.5 Overall Participant Profile

Taken together, the participant profile demonstrates variation in age, gender, teaching experience, and educational level. The sample includes teachers at different stages of their professional careers and across multiple educational settings. This diversity provides a broader descriptive basis for examining occupational stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping, organizational support, and sustainable teaching practices.

Table 4.5

Summary of Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	Largest category	n	%
Age	31–40 years	82	32.5
Gender	Female	143	56.7
Teaching experience	5–10 years	71	28.2
Educational level	Secondary	91	36.1
Total valid sample	—	252	100.0

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The participant profile provides the descriptive foundation for the analysis that follows. The next section examines the participants' reported **experiences of teacher stress and burnout**, including the principal occupational demands identified by respondents and the extent to which teachers reported experiences corresponding to exhaustion, psychological distance or cynicism, and perceived professional efficacy.

4.3 Experiences of Teacher Stress and Burnout

The first substantive area of analysis examined teachers' experiences of occupational stress and burnout. The analysis focused on the extent to which participants experienced workplace demands, including workload, administrative responsibilities, classroom-related pressures, emotional demands, and difficulties associated with balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Burnout was examined in relation to three principal dimensions: exhaustion, psychological distance or cynicism toward work, and perceived professional efficacy.

The findings indicate that occupational stress represents a substantial component of teachers' reported professional experiences. Participants reported that workload and the accumulation of responsibilities beyond direct classroom teaching contributed to their perceptions of workplace pressure. Administrative duties, lesson preparation, assessment, communication responsibilities, and classroom management were among the areas examined in relation to occupational demands.

4.3.1 Sources of Occupational Stress

Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which different workplace conditions contributed to their occupational stress. The principal areas examined included workload, administrative responsibilities, classroom management, emotional demands, time pressure, and work-life interference.

Table 4.6

Reported Sources of Teacher Stress

Source of stress	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Overall workload	3.74	0.91	High
Administrative responsibilities	3.61	0.96	High
Classroom management	3.48	0.94	Moderate-High
Time pressure	3.69	0.89	High
Emotional demands	3.42	0.98	Moderate-High
Work-life interference	3.57	1.01	High
Overall occupational stress	3.59	0.78	High

The proposed descriptive results indicate that **overall workload** represents the highest-rated source of occupational stress, followed by time pressure and administrative responsibilities. Work-life interference also demonstrates a relatively high mean score, suggesting that professional demands may extend beyond the formal teaching environment and affect teachers' capacity to maintain adequate personal time and recovery.

Classroom management and emotional demands also show elevated levels, although their mean values are comparatively lower than workload and time pressure. This pattern indicates that teacher

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stress may arise from the combined effect of multiple demands rather than from a single occupational factor.

4.3.2 Experiences of Burnout

Burnout was examined across the dimensions of exhaustion, psychological distance or cynicism, and perceived professional efficacy. These dimensions were considered separately because burnout is not represented by a single emotional state but involves a broader pattern of occupational functioning.

Table 4.7

Dimensions of Teacher Burnout

Burnout dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Emotional/occupational exhaustion	3.56	0.93	High
Psychological distance/cynicism	3.08	1.02	Moderate
Reduced professional efficacy	2.71	0.88	Moderate
Overall burnout	3.12	0.76	Moderate

The proposed results indicate that **exhaustion** is the most prominent burnout dimension among the participating teachers. The relatively higher exhaustion score compared with psychological distance and reduced professional efficacy suggests that teachers may experience considerable occupational fatigue without necessarily reporting an equivalent level of detachment from their profession or loss of perceived professional effectiveness.

The psychological-distance dimension shows a moderate level, indicating that some teachers may experience frustration, detachment, or reduced emotional connection with aspects of their work. The comparatively lower score for reduced professional efficacy suggests that teachers may continue to perceive themselves as capable of performing their professional responsibilities even when experiencing substantial occupational exhaustion.

These findings are important for distinguishing between **occupational stress and burnout**. Stress reflects teachers' perceived responses to workplace demands, whereas burnout represents a more persistent occupational pattern involving exhaustion, psychological distance or cynicism, and professional efficacy. Consequently, high occupational stress does not automatically indicate that every teacher is experiencing burnout.

4.3.3 Relationship Between Stress and Burnout

The relationship between occupational stress and burnout was examined to determine whether teachers reporting higher levels of occupational stress also tended to report greater burnout.

Table 4.8

Association Between Occupational Stress and Burnout

Variables	Correlation (r)	Significance
Occupational stress ↔ Burnout	0.62	p < .001

The proposed correlation indicates a **positive association** between occupational stress and burnout. Teachers reporting higher levels of occupational stress also tend to report higher levels of burnout. The relationship is statistically significant at the 0.001 level.

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This result provides quantitative support for examining occupational demands and burnout together within the study. However, because the research design is cross-sectional and non-experimental, the association should not be interpreted as evidence that occupational stress directly causes burnout.

4.4 Teacher Well-Being and Resilience

The second area of analysis examined teachers' reported well-being and resilience. Teacher well-being was considered in relation to psychological functioning, professional satisfaction, energy and capacity to maintain effective professional functioning. Resilience was examined as a personal resource reflecting teachers' perceived capacity to adapt to difficulties, recover from challenging experiences, and continue functioning effectively in demanding circumstances.

4.4.1 Teacher Well-Being

Participants' responses indicated variation in their perceptions of professional well-being. The analysis considered positive aspects of teachers' professional experiences alongside potential indicators of strain.

Table 4.9

Teacher Well-Being

Well-being dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Psychological well-being	3.21	0.84	Moderate
Professional satisfaction	3.36	0.91	Moderate
Sense of professional purpose	3.58	0.86	High
Energy for professional work	3.02	0.94	Moderate
Overall teacher well-being	3.29	0.76	Moderate

The proposed findings indicate an overall **moderate level of teacher well-being**. Participants report comparatively stronger scores for professional purpose, suggesting that many teachers continue to perceive meaning and value in their professional role despite experiencing workplace demands.

In contrast, energy for professional work records the lowest mean among the measured dimensions. This pattern is consistent with the higher levels of occupational exhaustion observed in Section 4.3 and suggests that positive professional purpose may coexist with considerable demands on teachers' energy and recovery.

4.4.2 Teacher Resilience

Resilience was examined as a personal resource rather than as an indication that teachers should tolerate excessive or persistent workplace demands. The analysis considered teachers' perceived ability to adapt to challenges, recover from difficulties, maintain persistence, and continue functioning effectively.

Table 4.10

Teacher Resilience

Resilience dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
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Adaptability	3.54	0.83	High
Persistence	3.67	0.79	High
Recovery from difficulties	3.31	0.91	Moderate
Confidence in managing challenges	3.59	0.82	High
Overall resilience	3.53	0.72	High

The proposed findings indicate a relatively **high overall level of perceived resilience** among participants. Persistence records the highest mean score, followed by confidence in managing professional challenges and adaptability.

The comparatively lower score for recovery from difficulties suggests that being able to continue working under pressure does not necessarily mean that teachers recover quickly from occupational strain. This distinction is particularly relevant to the present study because sustainable professional functioning requires not only persistence during demanding periods but also opportunities for recovery.

4.4.3 Relationship Between Resilience and Teacher Well-Being

The association between resilience and teacher well-being was examined to determine whether teachers with stronger perceived resilience also reported more positive levels of well-being.

Table 4.11

Association Between Resilience and Teacher Well-Being

Variables	Correlation (r)	Significance
Resilience ↔ Teacher well-being	0.54	p < .001

The proposed results indicate a **positive and statistically significant association** between resilience and teacher well-being. Teachers reporting higher levels of resilience also tend to report higher levels of well-being.

This relationship supports the conceptualization of resilience as a personal resource within the study. Nevertheless, resilience should not be interpreted as a substitute for supportive working conditions. Personal resources operate within organizational contexts, and the presence of high resilience does not eliminate the potential effects of excessive workload, insufficient recovery time, or inadequate organizational support.

4.5 Coping Strategies

The third area of analysis examined the strategies teachers reported using to manage occupational stress and challenging professional experiences. Coping was considered as a process through which teachers respond to workplace demands rather than as a single fixed characteristic.

The analysis distinguished between strategies that involve actively addressing workplace problems, strategies aimed at regulating emotional responses, and strategies involving interpersonal or organizational support. This distinction enables the findings to identify not only whether teachers cope with stress but also **how** they attempt to manage it.

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4.5.1 Types of Coping Strategies

Table 4.12

Reported Coping Strategies Among Teachers

Coping strategy	Mean	SD	Relative use
Planning and problem solving	3.72	0.81	High
Time management and prioritization	3.65	0.86	High
Seeking support from colleagues	3.57	0.92	High
Seeking support from family/friends	3.49	0.97	Moderate-High
Positive reframing	3.61	0.83	High
Taking breaks/recovery activities	3.28	1.01	Moderate
Avoidance or disengagement	2.41	0.94	Low-Moderate
Overall adaptive coping	3.55	0.69	High

The proposed findings indicate that teachers most frequently use **planning and problem solving**, followed by time management and prioritization, positive reframing, and support from colleagues. These strategies involve active engagement with occupational demands or the mobilization of personal and social resources.

Seeking support from colleagues also records a relatively high mean, highlighting the potential importance of interpersonal relationships within teachers' professional environments. Support from family and friends represents another important coping resource, suggesting that teachers may draw on both workplace and non-workplace relationships when managing occupational demands.

Recovery-oriented strategies, such as taking breaks and engaging in activities that facilitate psychological recovery, show a comparatively moderate level of use. This finding is particularly relevant to sustainable teaching because effective coping may require opportunities for recovery rather than continued effort alone.

Avoidance or disengagement records the lowest mean among the measured strategies. While some teachers report using such strategies, their comparatively lower use suggests that active and support-oriented approaches are more commonly reported within the proposed sample.

4.5.2 Coping, Stress and Well-Being

The relationships between coping, occupational stress, and teacher well-being were examined to determine whether different coping patterns were associated with teachers' reported professional experiences.

Table 4.13

Associations Between Coping, Stress and Well-Being

Variables	Correlation (r)	Significance
Adaptive coping ↔ Teacher well-being	0.46	p < .001
Adaptive coping ↔ Occupational stress	-0.29	p < .001
Avoidance coping ↔ Occupational stress	0.31	p < .001
Avoidance coping ↔ Teacher well-being	-0.27	p < .001

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The proposed results indicate that **adaptive coping is positively associated with teacher well-being and negatively associated with occupational stress**. In contrast, avoidance-oriented coping shows a positive association with occupational stress and a negative association with teacher well-being.

These findings suggest that coping strategies may differ in their relationship with teachers' professional experiences. Active problem solving, planning, positive reframing, and social support appear to be associated with more positive outcomes, whereas avoidance-oriented responses are associated with less favourable patterns. However, these relationships should be interpreted as statistical associations rather than evidence that a particular coping strategy directly causes an improvement or deterioration in well-being.

Overall, the findings presented in Sections 4.3–4.5 indicate three interconnected patterns: teachers report substantial occupational demands and experiences of stress, resilience is positively associated with well-being, and coping strategies vary in their relationship with stress and well-being. These findings provide the basis for the subsequent examination of **sustainable teaching practices** and the organizational conditions that may support teachers' ability to maintain healthy and effective professional functioning.

4.6 Sustainable Teaching Practices

The final substantive area of analysis examined the extent to which teachers reported engaging in practices that support sustainable professional functioning. In the context of this study, sustainable teaching refers to the capacity to maintain effective teaching, professional commitment, and personal well-being over time without relying on continuous overextension or prolonged exposure to unmanaged occupational demands.

The analysis considered several dimensions of sustainable teaching, including workload management, professional boundaries, recovery and rest, collaboration, use of professional resources, continuous professional development, and the ability to maintain a manageable relationship between professional and personal responsibilities. These dimensions were examined because sustainable teaching involves both individual practices and the organizational conditions within which teachers perform their work.

4.6.1 Workload Management and Professional Boundaries

Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they engaged in practices designed to manage workload and establish sustainable professional boundaries.

Table 4.14

Workload Management and Professional Boundaries

Sustainable practice	Mean	SD	Level
Prioritizing important teaching tasks	3.68	0.82	High
Planning workload in advance	3.59	0.87	High
Setting reasonable professional boundaries	3.21	0.98	Moderate
Avoiding unnecessary work outside working hours	2.94	1.05	Moderate
Delegating or sharing responsibilities where possible	3.16	1.01	Moderate
Overall workload-management practice	3.32	0.74	Moderate–High

The proposed results indicate that teachers report relatively frequent use of workload-management strategies, particularly prioritizing important teaching tasks and planning their work in advance. These

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practices suggest that teachers attempt to organize competing responsibilities in ways that may reduce unnecessary occupational pressure.

However, establishing professional boundaries and avoiding work outside formal working hours receive comparatively lower scores. This pattern indicates that teachers may find it more difficult to limit the extension of professional responsibilities into personal time. Such a pattern is relevant to the study's examination of work-life balance because sustainable professional functioning requires not only efficient task management but also sufficient opportunities for recovery.

4.6.2 Recovery and Work-Life Balance

Recovery represents an important component of sustainable teaching because sustained exposure to occupational demands without adequate psychological and physical recovery may contribute to prolonged strain.

Table 4.15

Recovery and Work-Life Balance Practices

Practice	Mean	SD	Level
Taking sufficient breaks during demanding periods	3.12	1.02	Moderate
Maintaining time for family/personal activities	3.26	1.00	Moderate
Disconnecting from work after working hours	2.88	1.08	Moderate
Maintaining adequate rest and sleep routines	3.18	0.96	Moderate
Engaging in leisure or recreational activities	3.34	0.94	Moderate-High
Overall recovery and work-life balance	3.16	0.81	Moderate

The proposed findings indicate that recovery and work-life balance practices are present but less strongly established than some task-oriented coping strategies. In particular, the comparatively lower score for disconnecting from work after working hours suggests that professional responsibilities may continue to occupy teachers' attention beyond formal working time.

Leisure and recreational activities receive a comparatively higher score, indicating that teachers do engage in activities intended to support recovery. However, the moderate overall level suggests that opportunities for recovery may not always be sufficient to offset occupational demands.

4.6.3 Collaboration and Professional Support

Collaboration and access to professional support represent another dimension of sustainable teaching. Teachers who can share experiences, responsibilities, knowledge, and professional challenges with colleagues may have greater access to social and professional resources.

Table 4.16

Collaboration and Professional Support

Practice/resource	Mean	SD	Level
Collaboration with colleagues	3.71	0.84	High
Sharing teaching resources	3.63	0.86	High
Seeking advice from experienced colleagues	3.54	0.91	High
Participation in professional development	3.42	0.93	Moderate-High
Access to institutional professional resources	3.18	1.02	Moderate

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Overall collaboration and support	3.50	0.76	High
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The proposed findings indicate that collaboration represents one of the stronger dimensions of sustainable teaching. Collaboration with colleagues receives the highest mean, followed by sharing teaching resources and seeking professional advice.

The findings suggest that sustainable professional functioning is not exclusively dependent on individual coping. Interpersonal and organizational resources may also contribute to teachers' ability to manage demands and maintain effective professional practice.

4.6.4 Overall Sustainable Teaching Practices

The principal dimensions of sustainable teaching were combined to provide an overall descriptive assessment.

Table 4.17

Overall Sustainable Teaching Practices

Dimension	Mean	SD
Workload management	3.32	0.74
Recovery and work-life balance	3.16	0.81
Collaboration and professional support	3.50	0.76
Professional development	3.42	0.82
Overall sustainable teaching practices	3.35	0.68

The proposed overall mean of **3.35** indicates a moderate-to-high level of sustainable teaching practices among the participating teachers. Collaboration and professional support represent the strongest dimension, while recovery and work-life balance record the comparatively lowest level.

This pattern is important because sustainable teaching cannot be understood solely in terms of teachers' ability to organize their workload. It also involves the availability of opportunities for recovery, supportive professional relationships, manageable boundaries, and conditions that allow teachers to maintain their professional effectiveness over time.

4.6.5 Sustainable Teaching, Burnout and Well-Being

The relationship between sustainable teaching practices and the principal outcomes of the study was also examined.

Table 4.18

Associations Between Sustainable Teaching, Burnout and Well-Being

Variables	Correlation (r)	Significance
Sustainable teaching ↔ Teacher well-being	0.51	p < .001
Sustainable teaching ↔ Burnout	-0.43	p < .001
Sustainable teaching ↔ Occupational stress	-0.34	p < .001

The proposed results indicate that sustainable teaching practices are **positively associated with teacher well-being** and **negatively associated with occupational stress and burnout**. Teachers

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reporting stronger sustainable teaching practices also tend to report more positive well-being and lower levels of burnout.

The findings provide empirical support for examining sustainability as a broader dimension of teacher well-being rather than treating it simply as an additional coping technique. Sustainable teaching incorporates workload management, recovery, professional boundaries, collaboration, and access to resources that may enable teachers to maintain their professional functioning over time.

Because the study is cross-sectional, these associations cannot establish whether sustainable practices directly reduce burnout or whether teachers experiencing lower burnout are more able to engage in sustainable practices. The direction of these relationships therefore requires cautious interpretation.

4.7 Major Findings and Themes

The findings presented in this chapter reveal several interconnected patterns concerning teacher stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping, and sustainable professional practice. Although the study uses a quantitative design, the results can be organized into several overarching **empirical themes** that correspond directly with the research objectives and conceptual framework.

Theme 1: Occupational Demands as a Major Source of Teacher Stress

The findings indicate that occupational demands represent an important component of teachers' reported stress. Workload, time pressure, administrative responsibilities, classroom management, emotional demands, and work-life interference emerge as important areas of occupational pressure. Among the proposed measures, overall workload records the highest stress-related mean.

The findings therefore indicate that teacher stress extends beyond classroom teaching itself. Teachers' professional responsibilities encompass multiple interconnected tasks, and the cumulative nature of these demands may contribute to perceptions of sustained occupational pressure.

Theme 2: Exhaustion as the Most Prominent Dimension of Burnout

Among the three dimensions of burnout examined, exhaustion demonstrates the highest reported level. Psychological distance or cynicism is present at a moderate level, while perceived professional efficacy is comparatively less affected.

This pattern suggests that teachers may experience substantial occupational fatigue while continuing to maintain a sense of professional competence and commitment. Burnout therefore cannot be reduced to a simple loss of motivation or effectiveness; different dimensions may develop at different intensities.

Theme 3: Resilience as a Personal Resource

The findings indicate a relatively high level of perceived teacher resilience. Adaptability, persistence, and confidence in managing challenges are among the stronger resilience dimensions.

The positive association between resilience and teacher well-being indicates that resilience functions as an important personal resource within the study's conceptual framework. However, the findings also indicate that resilience should not be interpreted as an alternative to organizational support. Teachers may demonstrate considerable resilience while simultaneously experiencing substantial occupational demands.

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Theme 4: Active and Social Coping

Planning, problem solving, time management, positive reframing, and social support emerge as commonly reported coping strategies. Teachers appear to rely on both individual and interpersonal resources when responding to occupational demands.

The positive association between adaptive coping and well-being, together with the negative association between adaptive coping and occupational stress, suggests that coping patterns are relevant to teachers' professional experiences. Conversely, avoidance-oriented coping demonstrates less favourable associations with stress and well-being.

Theme 5: Recovery and Work-Life Balance as Areas of Vulnerability

Although teachers report using several workload-management strategies, recovery and work-life balance receive comparatively lower ratings. In particular, maintaining separation between professional responsibilities and personal time appears more difficult than planning or prioritizing work tasks.

This pattern suggests that teachers may be able to manage immediate professional demands while still experiencing difficulties in achieving sufficient psychological detachment and recovery outside work.

Theme 6: Collaboration as an Important Sustainable Resource

Collaboration and professional support emerge as relatively strong dimensions of sustainable teaching. Teachers report frequent collaboration with colleagues, sharing of resources, and seeking professional advice.

This finding reinforces the importance of social and organizational resources within the JD-R framework. Sustainable professional functioning appears to involve not only individual resilience but also access to supportive relationships and shared professional resources.

Theme 7: Sustainable Teaching and Teacher Well-Being

Sustainable teaching practices show a positive association with teacher well-being and negative associations with stress and burnout. These findings suggest that sustainable professional practices may represent an important component of teachers' long-term well-being.

At the same time, the results should not be interpreted as demonstrating a one-directional causal relationship. Sustainable teaching, well-being, stress, and burnout may influence one another over time, while organizational conditions may affect all of these variables simultaneously.

Table 4.19

Summary of Major Empirical Findings

Research area	Principal finding
Occupational stress	Workload and time pressure emerge as prominent sources of stress
Burnout	Exhaustion is the most prominent burnout dimension
Well-being	Overall well-being is moderate within the proposed sample
Resilience	Participants report relatively high perceived resilience

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Coping	Planning, problem solving and social support are frequently reported
Work-life balance	Recovery and separation from work remain comparatively weaker
Collaboration	Collegial collaboration is a strong sustainable resource
Sustainable teaching	Sustainable practices are positively associated with well-being
Stress and burnout	Higher stress is associated with higher burnout
Resilience and well-being	Higher resilience is associated with higher well-being
Sustainable practices and burnout	Stronger sustainable practices are associated with lower burnout

Taken together, the findings indicate that teacher well-being is shaped by an interaction between **occupational demands, personal resources, organizational resources, and sustainable professional practices**. The results therefore provide empirical support for the multidimensional structure proposed in the conceptual framework.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the empirical findings of the study based on the proposed **252 valid teacher responses**. The chapter began by describing the demographic and professional characteristics of the participants and subsequently examined teachers' experiences of occupational stress and burnout, teacher well-being and resilience, coping strategies, and sustainable teaching practices.

The findings indicate that occupational stress is associated with multiple dimensions of teachers' professional responsibilities, with workload, time pressure, administrative responsibilities, and work-life interference emerging as important sources of pressure. Among the burnout dimensions examined, exhaustion represents the most prominent dimension, while psychological distance and reduced professional efficacy demonstrate comparatively lower levels.

The findings also indicate that teachers report relatively strong levels of resilience and make substantial use of active and social coping strategies, particularly planning, problem solving, time management, positive reframing, and collegial support. Resilience is positively associated with teacher well-being, while adaptive coping is associated with more positive well-being and lower occupational stress.

Sustainable teaching practices demonstrate a moderate-to-high overall level, with collaboration and professional support emerging as relatively strong dimensions. In contrast, recovery and work-life balance demonstrate comparatively lower levels, particularly in relation to maintaining boundaries between professional and personal time. Sustainable teaching practices are positively associated with teacher well-being and negatively associated with stress and burnout.

Overall, the findings support the central proposition of the study that teacher stress and burnout cannot be understood solely through individual characteristics. The results point toward an interconnected system in which **occupational demands contribute to stress, personal resources such as resilience and coping provide potential protection, organizational and social resources provide contextual support, and sustainable teaching practices are associated with teachers' longer-term professional well-being**.

The findings provide the empirical foundation for the discussion presented in Chapter 5. The next chapter interprets these results in relation to the existing literature and the Job Demands–Resources framework, considers their theoretical and practical implications, identifies recommendations and limitations, and presents directions for future research.

CHAPTER 5 — DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and interprets the findings of the study on how teachers experience and cope with occupational stress and burnout, with particular attention to teacher well-being, resilience, coping strategies, organizational support, work-life balance, and sustainable teaching practices. The discussion connects the empirical findings presented in Chapter 4 with the theoretical framework and previous research reviewed in Chapter 2.

The study was guided primarily by the **Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model**, which conceptualizes employee well-being as a dynamic outcome of the interaction between occupational demands and available resources. Within the present study, occupational demands include workload, administrative responsibilities, classroom management, emotional demands, time pressure, and work-life interference. Personal resources include resilience, self-efficacy, and coping strategies, while organizational resources include leadership support, collegial relationships, autonomy, professional resources, and supportive working conditions.

The findings indicate that teacher stress and burnout are multidimensional experiences that cannot be adequately explained by individual coping capacity alone. Teachers may possess considerable resilience and employ adaptive coping strategies while simultaneously experiencing substantial workload, time pressure, administrative responsibilities, and difficulties maintaining boundaries between professional and personal life. This reinforces the importance of examining teachers within their broader organizational and professional environments.

The chapter first discusses the major findings in relation to the research questions and previous empirical literature. It then considers the theoretical implications of the findings for the JD-R model and complementary perspectives on resilience, coping, and teacher well-being. The subsequent sections address practical implications, recommendations, limitations, future research, and the overall conclusion of the study.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

5.2.1 Occupational Demands and Teacher Stress

One of the central findings of the study is that teachers experience occupational stress in connection with multiple and overlapping professional demands. Workload, time pressure, administrative responsibilities, classroom management, emotional demands, and work-life interference emerge as important dimensions of teachers' reported occupational pressure.

This finding is consistent with the broader evidence base concerning teacher working conditions. The OECD's TALIS 2024 findings indicate that workload-related demands, administrative work, classroom discipline, adapting teaching to diverse learner needs, and

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accountability are important components of teachers' working conditions. Across participating OECD education systems, approximately **19% of lower-secondary teachers reported experiencing "a lot" of work-related stress**, while general administrative work was identified as a source of work-related stress by approximately **52% of teachers on average**.

The present findings therefore reinforce the view that teacher stress should not be conceptualized solely as an individual's inability to cope with difficult circumstances. Occupational stress may emerge from the cumulative effect of several demands operating simultaneously. A teacher may, for example, manage classroom instruction effectively while also facing assessment deadlines, administrative documentation, communication responsibilities, and expectations concerning student outcomes. The combination of these responsibilities may create a level of cumulative demand that is not captured by examining classroom teaching in isolation.

The findings also support the JD-R distinction between **job demands and job resources**. Where demands remain high without corresponding resources, the likelihood of strain and reduced well-being may increase. The implication is not that workload itself inevitably produces burnout, but that the balance between demands and available resources is important for understanding teachers' professional experiences.

5.2.2 Teacher Stress and Burnout

The findings demonstrate a positive association between occupational stress and burnout. Teachers reporting higher levels of occupational stress also tend to report greater experiences of burnout. Among the burnout dimensions considered in the study, exhaustion appears to be particularly prominent, while psychological distance or cynicism and reduced professional efficacy demonstrate comparatively lower levels.

This pattern is consistent with the conceptualization of burnout adopted from the World Health Organization, which identifies burnout as an occupational phenomenon resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. The WHO framework identifies three central dimensions: energy depletion or exhaustion, increased mental distance or cynicism toward one's work, and reduced professional efficacy.

The prominence of exhaustion in the present findings is particularly important. It suggests that teachers may experience substantial depletion of physical and psychological energy before more pronounced forms of psychological distancing or reduced professional efficacy become evident. Burnout should therefore not be understood as a sudden condition that appears only after professional commitment has disappeared. Instead, the findings support an understanding of burnout as a multidimensional process associated with sustained occupational strain.

The relationship between stress and burnout also supports the importance of distinguishing the two concepts. Stress may occur as a response to particular occupational demands, whereas burnout reflects a more persistent pattern involving exhaustion, psychological distance, and professional efficacy. Consequently, strategies aimed at addressing teacher burnout need to consider the working conditions that generate persistent stress rather than focusing exclusively on individual stress-management techniques.

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5.2.3 Teacher Well-Being

The study indicates a moderate level of overall teacher well-being, with variation across dimensions. Teachers report relatively stronger perceptions of professional purpose while reporting comparatively lower levels of energy for professional work.

This pattern is consistent with the multidimensional understanding of teacher well-being identified in previous research. Hascher and Waber's systematic review of teacher well-being research demonstrated considerable conceptual and methodological variation in the field and highlighted the importance of examining well-being across multiple domains rather than reducing it to a single indicator. Similarly, large-scale meta-analytic evidence has identified a range of personal and occupational factors associated with teacher well-being.

The coexistence of professional purpose with lower energy is particularly relevant to the present study. It indicates that teachers may continue to find meaning in their profession even when experiencing substantial occupational strain. Therefore, the presence of professional commitment should not be interpreted as evidence that working conditions are sustainable. A teacher can value teaching deeply and still experience exhaustion, inadequate recovery, or work-life interference.

This finding supports a distinction between **professional meaning and sustainable professional functioning**. Teacher well-being requires more than commitment to the profession; it also requires conditions that allow teachers to maintain psychological energy, recover from demanding periods, and continue performing effectively over time.

5.2.4 Resilience and Teacher Well-Being

The findings indicate relatively strong perceived resilience among the participating teachers and a positive association between resilience and teacher well-being. Teachers who report greater capacity to adapt, persist, and manage professional challenges also tend to report more positive well-being.

This finding is consistent with systematic reviews of teacher resilience emphasizing the interaction between individual resources and occupational conditions. Recent reviews have conceptualized teacher resilience as involving personal competence, coping, psychological and emotional resources, professional competence, social relationships, and adaptability rather than as a fixed personality characteristic.

The present study contributes to this perspective by positioning resilience as a **personal resource within a wider system of occupational demands and resources**. Resilience may help teachers manage difficult circumstances, recover from challenges, and maintain professional functioning. However, resilience should not be interpreted as a requirement for teachers to absorb unlimited occupational pressure.

This distinction has important implications. If resilience is treated solely as an individual responsibility, institutions may unintentionally shift responsibility for unhealthy working conditions onto teachers. The findings instead support a complementary interpretation: teachers require personal resources to navigate professional challenges, but organizations also have responsibility for creating conditions in which those resources can operate effectively.

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5.2.5 Coping Strategies

The study indicates that teachers use multiple coping strategies to manage occupational stress. Planning and problem solving, time management, positive reframing, and seeking support from colleagues emerge as relatively prominent approaches. Avoidance-oriented coping demonstrates comparatively less favourable associations with teacher well-being and occupational stress.

These findings are consistent with the broader literature distinguishing between adaptive and less adaptive coping approaches. Active problem solving can help individuals respond directly to identifiable demands, while positive reframing may assist in managing the emotional interpretation of challenging circumstances. Social support can provide both emotional and practical resources.

The importance of collegial support is particularly notable. Teachers do not necessarily manage occupational stress in isolation. Professional relationships can provide opportunities for advice, emotional support, resource sharing, and collaborative problem solving. This reinforces the importance of the social dimension of teacher well-being.

At the same time, coping strategies should not be viewed as substitutes for improvements in working conditions. If occupational demands remain excessive, individual coping may provide only partial or temporary protection. Sustainable coping therefore requires an environment in which teachers have reasonable workloads, sufficient autonomy, opportunities for recovery, and access to supportive professional relationships.

5.2.6 Recovery and Work-Life Balance

The findings identify recovery and work-life balance as comparatively weaker dimensions of sustainable professional functioning. Teachers report greater difficulty disconnecting from work and maintaining clear boundaries between professional responsibilities and personal life than they do in using task-management strategies.

This finding has particular relevance to the sustainability dimension of the study. Managing workload efficiently does not necessarily guarantee adequate recovery. Teachers may become highly effective at prioritizing tasks while still working beyond formal hours, thinking about unresolved professional responsibilities outside work, or sacrificing personal recovery time.

The OECD TALIS 2024 findings provide broader evidence for this concern. Only approximately **11% of teachers, on average across OECD education systems, reported that their work leaves them "a lot" of time for personal life.**

The present findings therefore support the argument that work-life balance should be considered an organizational and structural issue as well as an individual time-management issue. Sustainable teaching requires opportunities for teachers to disengage from work, recover, maintain relationships outside work, and preserve sufficient personal resources for continued professional functioning.

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5.2.7 Sustainable Teaching Practices

The findings indicate a moderate-to-high level of sustainable teaching practices, with collaboration and professional support emerging as comparatively strong dimensions. Sustainable teaching is positively associated with teacher well-being and negatively associated with stress and burnout within the proposed findings.

This supports the conceptualization of sustainability developed in Chapter 2. Sustainable teaching should not be reduced to personal self-care. Rather, it involves a broader combination of manageable workload, professional boundaries, recovery, collaboration, autonomy, access to resources, and professional development.

Recent research on teacher well-being interventions also suggests that interventions can produce improvements in areas such as stress, burnout, anxiety, depression, and well-being. However, systematic reviews have also noted considerable variation in intervention approaches and measurement. This suggests that individual-level interventions may be useful but should be considered alongside organizational and contextual measures.

The present study therefore supports a broader conception of sustainable teaching in which teachers' individual practices are complemented by supportive working conditions. The objective should not simply be to make teachers more capable of enduring demanding environments, but to create professional conditions under which effective teaching can be maintained without persistent deterioration in well-being.

5.2.8 Overall Interpretation

Taken together, the findings support an integrated understanding of teacher stress and burnout. Occupational demands are associated with stress and burnout, while resilience and adaptive coping are associated with more positive professional experiences. Organizational and social resources, including collaboration and support, appear to form an important contextual foundation for sustainable professional functioning.

The findings therefore reinforce the central proposition of the study: **teacher well-being is produced through the interaction of demands, personal resources, organizational resources, recovery, and sustainable professional practices.**

The results also demonstrate why no single intervention is likely to address every dimension of teacher stress and burnout. Individual resources may help teachers respond to demands, but organizational resources influence the level and nature of those demands. Similarly, sustainable teaching practices may support well-being, but their effectiveness depends partly on whether teachers have sufficient time, autonomy, support, and recovery opportunities to implement them.

5.3 Theoretical Implications

The findings have several implications for the theoretical understanding of teacher stress, burnout, resilience, and sustainable professional functioning.

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5.3.1 Support for the Job Demands–Resources Model

The principal theoretical implication is that the findings are broadly consistent with the **Job Demands–Resources model**. The positive association between occupational stress and burnout is consistent with the proposition that sustained job demands contribute to occupational strain. At the same time, the relationships involving resilience, coping, organizational support, and sustainable teaching are consistent with the importance of resources in supporting employee well-being.

The study therefore extends the application of JD-R to teacher well-being by considering both **personal and organizational resources**. Rather than examining workload or stress in isolation, the framework provides a basis for understanding how demands interact with the resources available to teachers.

The findings also support the proposition that job resources have a motivational and protective relevance. Collegial support, professional resources, autonomy, and opportunities for recovery may contribute to teachers' capacity to remain engaged and function effectively despite demanding professional conditions.

5.3.2 Resilience as a Personal Resource Within a Contextual System

A second theoretical implication concerns the conceptualization of resilience. The findings support viewing resilience as a **dynamic personal resource** rather than as a fixed personal characteristic.

Teachers who report stronger resilience also report stronger well-being, suggesting that resilience may contribute to teachers' ability to manage occupational challenges. However, the study's conceptual framework places resilience within the wider system of job demands and resources. This prevents resilience from being interpreted as an individual solution to structurally generated occupational problems.

The theoretical implication is therefore a more contextual understanding of resilience: resilience may influence how teachers respond to demands, but the effectiveness and sustainability of that response depend partly on the environment in which teachers work.

5.3.3 Integration of Coping With the JD-R Perspective

The study also contributes theoretically by incorporating **coping strategies** into a JD-R-informed framework. Coping provides a mechanism through which teachers respond to perceived demands, while job resources influence the conditions under which coping occurs.

The distinction between active/supportive coping and avoidance-oriented coping further suggests that coping should not be conceptualized as a uniformly beneficial process. Different strategies may be associated with different patterns of stress and well-being. This supports a more differentiated understanding of coping within occupational stress research.

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5.3.4 Work-Life Balance as a Resource for Sustainable Functioning

The findings provide further support for treating **work-life balance and recovery as integral components of teacher well-being** rather than peripheral lifestyle concerns.

From a JD-R perspective, adequate recovery can be understood as supporting the replenishment of personal resources. Persistent work–personal-life interference may instead reduce opportunities for recovery and contribute to cumulative strain. Incorporating work-life balance into the framework therefore broadens the analysis beyond the immediate workplace and recognizes that teachers' professional functioning is connected to their capacity to recover outside work.

5.3.5 Sustainable Teaching as an Extension of Teacher Well-Being

A further theoretical contribution is the positioning of **sustainable teaching** as a distinct but interconnected construct. Teacher well-being describes an important aspect of teachers' current professional experience, whereas sustainable teaching emphasizes whether professional functioning can be maintained over time.

This distinction introduces a temporal dimension into the conceptual framework. A teacher may currently function effectively while relying on excessive personal effort, reduced recovery, or extended working hours. Such functioning may not be sustainable in the longer term.

The study therefore proposes that sustainable teaching should be understood as an outcome of the balance among occupational demands, personal resources, organizational resources, recovery, and professional practices. This extends the analysis of teacher well-being from the question of **how teachers feel at a particular point in time** to the broader question of **whether teachers can remain healthy and professionally effective over an extended career**.

5.3.6 An Integrated Theoretical Proposition

Overall, the findings support an integrated theoretical proposition in which teacher stress and burnout emerge from the interaction of occupational demands with available resources, while well-being and sustainable professional functioning are supported by adequate personal, social, and organizational resources.

The resulting theoretical structure can be summarized as:

Job Demands → Occupational Stress → Burnout

with the parallel influence of:

Personal Resources + Organizational Resources + Recovery → Teacher Well-Being

and:

Resources + Sustainable Practices → Sustainable Professional Functioning

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This framework reinforces the importance of avoiding purely individualistic explanations of teacher burnout. Resilience, coping, and self-efficacy remain important, but they operate within organizational environments that can either strengthen or constrain teachers' ability to maintain well-being.

The theoretical contribution of the study therefore lies in bringing **stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping, organizational support, work-life balance, and sustainable teaching** into a single analytical framework. This integrated perspective provides a basis for understanding teacher well-being as a dynamic interaction between individual capacity and working conditions rather than as a characteristic located exclusively within the individual teacher.

5.4 Practical Implications

The findings of this study have implications for teachers, school and institutional leaders, teacher educators, educational policymakers, and other stakeholders concerned with teacher well-being and sustainable professional practice. The central practical implication is that teacher stress and burnout should not be addressed exclusively through individual stress-management techniques. The findings indicate that occupational demands, personal resources, organizational resources, recovery, and sustainable teaching practices interact in shaping teachers' professional experiences. Consequently, effective responses should operate at multiple levels.

5.4.1 Implications for Teachers

For individual teachers, the findings highlight the value of developing adaptive coping strategies while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. Planning, prioritization, problem solving, positive reframing, seeking support, and deliberate recovery may help teachers manage demanding periods more effectively. However, these practices should be understood as resources rather than as expectations that teachers should independently absorb excessive workloads.

The findings also suggest the importance of recognizing early signs of sustained occupational strain. Persistent exhaustion, difficulty disengaging from work, reduced recovery, and continuing work-related demands outside formal working hours may indicate that existing professional arrangements require attention. Teachers may therefore benefit from developing realistic workload-management practices while also communicating workload concerns and seeking appropriate organizational support.

5.4.2 Implications for School and Institutional Leaders

School and institutional leaders have an important role in addressing the organizational conditions associated with teacher stress. Workload allocation, administrative requirements, scheduling, communication expectations, professional autonomy, and access to resources can influence teachers' daily experiences.

The findings suggest that organizational responses should extend beyond occasional wellness activities. Leaders may consider reviewing administrative processes, identifying unnecessary duplication of tasks, improving workload distribution, strengthening communication channels, and providing teachers with greater opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their professional work.

The importance of collegial support also indicates that institutions can strengthen collaborative professional cultures. Structured opportunities for teachers to share resources, discuss challenges,

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mentor one another, and collaborate on instructional practices may provide both practical and social resources.

5.4.3 Implications for Teacher Education and Professional Development

Teacher education and professional development programmes can incorporate components addressing occupational well-being, resilience, coping, emotional regulation, workload management, professional boundaries, and sustainable teaching. Such preparation is particularly relevant because teachers enter professional environments in which instructional responsibilities coexist with administrative, interpersonal, and emotional demands.

Professional development should not, however, focus exclusively on individual resilience. It should also help teachers recognize organizational resources, develop collaborative practices, use available support systems, and understand the relationship between working conditions and professional well-being.

5.4.4 Implications for Educational Policymakers

At the policy level, the findings indicate the importance of considering teacher well-being as part of broader educational workforce sustainability. Policies concerned with teacher performance, accountability, curriculum implementation, reporting requirements, and administrative processes should consider their potential workload implications.

Policy interventions may therefore benefit from assessing not only whether educational requirements are achievable but also whether the cumulative demands placed on teachers are compatible with sustainable professional functioning. Teacher well-being should be considered alongside educational quality rather than as a separate concern.

5.4.5 Implications for Sustainable Teaching

The findings reinforce the importance of moving from short-term stress management toward **sustainable professional functioning**. A sustainable teaching environment is one in which teachers can maintain professional effectiveness without continuously sacrificing recovery, personal time, or psychological well-being.

This requires attention to workload, professional boundaries, recovery opportunities, collegial relationships, autonomy, professional development, and access to organizational resources. Sustainable teaching should therefore be considered a shared responsibility between teachers and the institutions in which they work.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings and the theoretical framework of the study, the following recommendations are proposed.

5.5.1 Conduct Regular Workload Assessments

Educational institutions should periodically assess teachers' workloads, including direct teaching, lesson preparation, assessment, administrative work, meetings, communication responsibilities, and additional institutional duties. Such assessments can help identify cumulative demands that may not be apparent when individual responsibilities are considered separately.

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5.5.2 Reduce Unnecessary Administrative Burden

Where possible, institutions should review administrative procedures to identify repetitive documentation, unnecessary reporting requirements, and processes that can be simplified or digitized. Reducing avoidable administrative work may allow teachers to devote greater time and energy to core instructional responsibilities and professional recovery.

5.5.3 Strengthen Collegial and Leadership Support

Institutions should establish supportive professional environments in which teachers can seek advice, share teaching resources, discuss challenges, and receive constructive support from colleagues and leaders. Mentoring and peer-support arrangements may be particularly useful for teachers experiencing periods of increased occupational demand.

5.5.4 Develop Evidence-Based Teacher Well-Being Programmes

Teacher well-being programmes should incorporate evidence-based approaches addressing stress management, resilience, coping, psychological recovery, and professional well-being. Such programmes should complement rather than replace organizational measures addressing workload and working conditions.

5.5.5 Protect Recovery and Work-Life Boundaries

Institutions should consider policies and practices that support reasonable boundaries between professional and personal time. Where operationally feasible, expectations concerning communication outside working hours, non-essential meetings, and additional responsibilities should be clearly defined.

5.5.6 Strengthen Access to Professional Resources

Teachers should have reasonable access to instructional materials, technology, professional development, consultation, and other resources required to perform their roles effectively. Within the JD-R framework, adequate resources can help offset the strain associated with demanding professional environments.

5.5.7 Integrate Resilience With Organizational Responsibility

Teacher resilience programmes should avoid presenting resilience as an obligation to tolerate excessive occupational pressure. Resilience development should instead be combined with organizational measures that address workload, support, autonomy, resources, and recovery.

5.5.8 Promote Collaborative Teaching Practices

Institutions should encourage collaborative planning, resource sharing, peer mentoring, professional learning communities, and other forms of collective professional practice. Collaboration can reduce professional isolation while providing teachers with practical and emotional resources.

5.5.9 Monitor Teacher Well-Being Periodically

Institutions may establish periodic, confidential assessments of teacher well-being, stress, workload, and burnout-related indicators. Repeated monitoring can help identify emerging concerns and evaluate whether organizational interventions are producing meaningful improvements.

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5.5.10 Develop a Multi-Level Approach to Teacher Well-Being

The overall recommendation arising from the study is that teacher well-being should be addressed through a **multi-level framework** involving the individual teacher, professional relationships, institutional leadership, and wider educational policy.

Table 5.1

Recommended Actions for Supporting Sustainable Teacher Well-Being

Level	Recommended action	Primary objective
Individual	Coping, planning and recovery strategies	Strengthen personal resources
Interpersonal	Peer support and collaboration	Strengthen social resources
Institutional	Workload review and administrative reduction	Reduce unnecessary demands
Leadership	Support, autonomy and communication	Strengthen organizational resources
Professional	Training and development	Improve professional capacity
Policy	Review workload and accountability requirements	Promote sustainable working conditions

These recommendations reflect the central finding that sustainable teacher well-being requires both **resource development and demand management**. Efforts focused exclusively on individual behaviour are unlikely to address the full range of conditions associated with occupational stress and burnout.

5.6 Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of the study.

First, the study uses a **cross-sectional research design**. Data were collected during a defined period, meaning that the study provides a snapshot of teachers' experiences rather than tracking changes over time. Consequently, relationships identified among stress, burnout, resilience, coping, well-being, and sustainable teaching cannot be interpreted as definitive causal relationships.

Second, the study relies primarily on **self-reported questionnaire data**. Participants' responses reflect their perceptions and experiences, which are valuable for studying subjective constructs such as stress and well-being but may also be influenced by response tendencies, mood at the time of completion, recall, or social desirability.

Third, the study uses a **non-probability convenience sampling approach**. Although this approach facilitated access to eligible teachers and enabled the collection of a substantive dataset, the resulting sample may not be statistically representative of the wider teacher population. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings beyond the sampled population should be considered cautiously.

Fourth, the proposed study includes **252 valid participants**, which provides a useful basis for quantitative analysis but may limit the ability to conduct highly detailed subgroup analyses, particularly where participant numbers become small after division into multiple demographic or professional categories.

Fifth, the study focuses primarily on teachers' reported occupational experiences and does not independently measure all organizational conditions. Factors such as institutional culture, leadership

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practices, staffing levels, compensation, class size, student characteristics, and broader policy conditions may influence teacher well-being but may not be fully captured by the questionnaire.

Sixth, burnout is examined as an **occupational phenomenon rather than a clinical diagnosis**. The findings should therefore not be interpreted as providing medical or psychiatric diagnoses of individual participants.

Finally, because the study examines multiple related constructs, there is potential for conceptual and statistical overlap among variables such as stress, burnout, well-being, resilience, coping, and sustainable teaching. Careful operationalization and appropriate statistical analysis are therefore necessary to ensure that relationships among constructs are interpreted accurately.

These limitations do not invalidate the findings but establish the boundaries within which they should be interpreted. They also provide opportunities for future research to employ broader samples, longitudinal designs, multiple data sources, and more detailed contextual measures.

5.7 Future Research

Future research can extend the present study in several important directions.

First, **longitudinal research** could examine how teacher stress, burnout, resilience, well-being, and coping change over time. Repeated measurements across academic years could provide stronger evidence concerning temporal relationships and help identify whether prolonged occupational demands precede changes in burnout or whether changes in well-being subsequently influence coping and professional functioning.

Second, future studies could use **larger and probability-based samples** across different geographical regions and educational systems. Such research could improve the generalizability of findings and allow researchers to examine whether teacher stress and well-being vary across institutional, cultural, or policy contexts.

Third, future research could adopt a **mixed-methods approach**. Quantitative measures could establish patterns and relationships, while interviews or focus groups could provide deeper insight into how teachers experience workload, emotional demands, organizational support, coping, and sustainable teaching in their everyday professional lives.

Fourth, future studies could examine **organizational interventions** directly. Rather than focusing primarily on individual well-being programmes, researchers could investigate the effects of workload reduction, administrative simplification, leadership development, increased autonomy, peer-support systems, and changes in communication practices.

Fifth, research could examine **career-stage differences** in greater depth. Early-career teachers may encounter different demands from experienced teachers, while teachers approaching later career stages may face different concerns relating to workload, professional identity, recovery, and long-term sustainability.

Sixth, future research could investigate the role of **digital technologies and technology-related workload**. Digital communication, online teaching platforms, electronic reporting systems, and expectations of continuous availability may create both resources and additional demands for teachers.

Seventh, future research could investigate the relationship between teacher well-being and **student-related outcomes**, including classroom engagement, instructional quality, student satisfaction,

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absenteeism, and learning-related indicators. Such research could help clarify how teacher well-being relates to broader educational functioning.

Eighth, future research should examine **organizational support and leadership** as potentially important moderators or mediators of the relationship between occupational demands and teacher burnout. This would provide a more detailed test of the JD-R framework within educational settings.

Finally, future research could develop and test a more comprehensive **Sustainable Teaching Framework** integrating workload, recovery, resilience, coping, organizational support, professional autonomy, collaboration, and work-life balance. Such a framework could provide institutions with a structured basis for assessing and improving the long-term sustainability of teaching careers.

5.8 Conclusion

This study examined how teachers experience and cope with occupational stress and burnout, with particular emphasis on teacher well-being, resilience, coping strategies, organizational support, work-life balance, and sustainable teaching practices. The study was guided by the Job Demands–Resources model and approached teacher well-being as the result of interactions between occupational demands and the personal, social, and organizational resources available to teachers.

The findings indicate that teacher stress is associated with multiple professional demands, particularly workload, time pressure, administrative responsibilities, classroom-related pressures, emotional demands, and work-life interference. Burnout is similarly multidimensional, with exhaustion emerging as a particularly prominent aspect of teachers' reported experiences. These findings reinforce the importance of examining the conditions under which teachers work rather than interpreting burnout solely as an individual problem.

The study also demonstrates the importance of personal resources. Teachers report substantial resilience and use a range of coping strategies, including planning, problem solving, positive reframing, time management, and seeking support from colleagues. Resilience and adaptive coping are associated with more positive patterns of teacher well-being. However, these personal resources should not be interpreted as substitutes for supportive organizational conditions.

A particularly important finding concerns the role of **recovery and work-life balance**. Teachers may be able to manage immediate professional responsibilities while experiencing difficulty disconnecting from work and maintaining adequate personal recovery. This distinction is central to the concept of sustainable teaching. Effective teaching in the present does not necessarily mean that professional functioning is sustainable over the longer term.

The findings further indicate that collaboration and professional support are important components of sustainable teaching. Teachers' well-being is therefore shaped not only by their individual capacity to cope but also by the quality of their professional relationships and the resources available within their organizations.

The study consequently supports a shift from an exclusively individual approach to teacher stress toward a **multi-level understanding of teacher well-being**. Teachers require resilience and adaptive coping, but they also require manageable workloads, supportive leadership, collegial relationships, professional autonomy, adequate resources, and opportunities for recovery. Sustainable teaching emerges when these individual and contextual resources are sufficiently aligned with the demands of the profession.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings reinforce the usefulness of the JD-R model for understanding teacher stress and well-being while extending its application through explicit

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consideration of resilience, coping, work-life balance, recovery, and sustainable teaching. From a practical perspective, the findings indicate that educational institutions should combine individual well-being initiatives with organizational measures that address the sources and accumulation of occupational demands.

Ultimately, supporting teachers' well-being is not simply a matter of helping teachers cope with more pressure. It is a matter of creating professional environments in which teachers can **teach effectively, recover adequately, maintain meaningful professional lives, and remain capable of sustaining their work over time**. Sustainable teaching therefore requires a shared commitment from teachers, colleagues, institutional leaders, teacher educators, and policymakers to create conditions in which professional effectiveness and personal well-being can coexist.