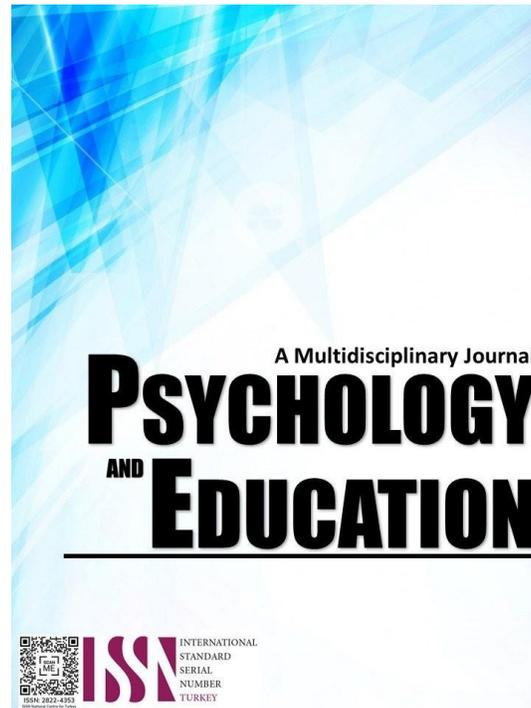


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Teacher Emotion and its Impact on Psychological Well-Being in Palawan State University Teachers

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Abstract

This two-phase study investigated the relationship between teachers' grit and their psychological well-being, focusing on the mediating role of teacher emotions. The study involved 626 teachers from Palawan State University in the Philippines, a developing country where teachers face numerous challenges. The study sought to address the gap in research on teacher psychological well-being at the school level in Asia, particularly in the Philippine context. The study employed structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships. Results indicated that teachers' grit did not directly influence their psychological well-being. Instead, grit fostered positive emotions related to teaching, such as joy and love, which, in turn, contributed to their psychological well-being. Teacher emotions fully mediated the relationship between grit and psychological well-being. Teachers across different colleges exhibited high levels of psychological well-being, although significant differences in scores were observed. Graduate School teachers reported the highest mean scores in perceived recognition at work, feeling of competency, and desire for involvement at work. Teachers from the Laboratory Elementary School demonstrated the highest levels of interpersonal fit at work and thriving at work. Based on the findings, the study recommends developing a wellness and psychological well-being program tailored to the specific needs of the Palawan State University academic community. This program could serve as a model for other institutions, promoting a culture of psychological health and supporting healthy work behaviors among teachers

Keywords: *grit, psychological well-being, teacher emotion, and engine of well-being framework.*

Introduction

To set the stage for understanding how crucial the work of Filipino teachers is, consider these excerpts from Front Row - a GMA News and Current Affairs program:

“For Elizabeth Miranda, no sacrifice is too great as she strives to teach the children of Sitio Barogante, a remote village in Occidental Mindoro even if it means crossing raging rivers and climbing steep mountains. Miranda walks a good two hours, crosses five rivers, and four mountains to reach her students...”

Miranda was featured by Front Row. (Filipina teacher braves rivers and crosses mountains daily to reach her students).

“The roof of my school has bullet holes,” narrates 2011 honoree Concepcion Tadifa Tababa, an ALS teacher based in Tubugan, Iloilo. “When I walk to where my learners are and to my home, it is not unlikely that I will encounter members of the New People’s Army (NPA) or military personnel.”

Traveling anywhere from eight to 18 hours to reach her community, Tababa explains that though the many clashes between the military and the NPA in their area have made her family uneasy, she believes the risk is worth taking. In all of these, there is one root: poverty.

These stories depicted in the transcripts may not represent the typical modern-day challenges of Filipino teachers, but they remind us that teaching is not a bed of roses for many, if not all. The satisfaction that this profession brings goes with various challenges, especially for developing countries like the Philippines. In fact, burgeoning studies and reports suggest that a conglomeration of various factors generates work-related stress for teachers: job demands, control (e.g., changes in terms and conditions without consultation and given responsibility without the authority to take decisions), relationships, role, changes, and support (e.g., lack of funds/resources to do the job and limited or no access to training).

On a more negative note, teaching as a profession is characterized by long hours of work, heavy workload, emotional demands in dealing with learners and parents, student discipline problems, and non-competitive salary among others. If this holds true, even in the Philippine context, it is possible for some teachers to consider leaving the profession in favor of other professions here or overseas. In the course of teachers' careers, work can be a source of a great deal of stress that may have obvious implications for their physical and mental health status (e.g., amotivation, detachment, absenteeism, and the decision to leave the profession) which would eventually affect the students' learning environment and interfere with their teaching-related achievement. These provide an invitation for school administrators to identify factors for teachers' psychological well-being, which becomes vital if the development of a data-based faculty well-being program is aimed at.

In the Philippines, a report indicated that with 22.8 million enrolled basic education students in the school year 2018-2019, with a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:43, a classroom-pupil ratio of 1:36, and problems in terms of a shortage of classrooms and teachers, overcrowding was expected. In addition to these, a great variety of concerns related to instructional input to education has been

identified. These include inadequate teacher in-service training, low teacher salaries, and the misallocation of teachers (teachers not teaching their specialties), which are potentially factors that can influence the psychological well-being of teachers.

Palawan represents a typical island province in the Philippines which is approximately around 591.35 kilometers away from Metro Manila. There are 7,632 public elementary and high school (Junior and Senior High Schools) teachers in the division of Palawan, in which 5,261 are from elementary schools, and 2,371 are from high schools. They are assigned in 851 schools. The contextual and situational factors: geographical location of Palawan from central Manila, the way the schools are managed, culture, availability of resources, and the number of students is a good opportunity for researchers to understand how they are coping with the challenges that go with teaching. Hence, a study on the psychological well-being of the teachers in this island province may represent an opportunity to understand how well they are coping with the challenges.

The change in the educational landscape of today's educational curricula can put teachers under a lot of stress. As a result, work-related stress has been documented to affect teachers' psychological well-being (PWB). The literature demonstrates that teachers are influenced by stress – they feel burned out, unhappy, dull, or unsatisfied because of factors such as a high teacher-student ratio, inconvenient or inefficient physical school conditions, and low salaries. In a study conducted in Turkey (www.turkegitimsen.org, 2013) involving 16,723 teachers, 66.9 percent of teachers have burn-out syndrome; 37 percent are in a state of temper and stress; 18.6 percent feel worthless; and 31.9 percent are exposed to parent or student violence. Other research supports the statement that teachers feel burned out at various levels, where they argue that teachers experience more burn-out syndrome compared to workers in other occupations.

Psychological well-being refers to the “positive emotional state that is the result of harmony between the sum of specific environmental factors on the one hand and the personal needs and expectations of the pupils vis-à-vis the school on the other” (Engels, Aelterman, Van Petegem, & Schepens, 2004, p. 128). Psychological well-being at work (PWBW) is a construct describing an individual's subjective positive work experience and is composed of five eudemonic dimensions: interpersonal fit at work, thriving at work, feeling of competency, perceived recognition at work, and desire for involvement at work.

This study is conceptualized to help address the following issues and/or gaps in the teacher psychological well-being literature: (1) there is scarce research on teacher psychological well-being at the school level in Asia, especially in the Philippine context; (2) teachers in the Philippines are facing high pressure or challenges during school change which is brought forth by the change in curriculum; (3) there are no explicit programs on faculty wellness that is informed by the needs of the teachers or data-driven; (4) current research is dominated by studies conducted in the west and the literature is still silent about the psychological well-being of Asians.

An ancillary objective of this study relates to examining the acceptability of the newly developed Triarchic Model of Grit Scale (TMGS; Datu, Mantak, & Chen, 2017). This framework needs cross-cultural examination, given that it added a new dimension (e.g., adaptability to the situation) in addition to a more popular two-factor model proposed in the west (e.g., perseverance of effort and consistency of interest) by Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly (2007). Although it was validated among Filipino student samples, it must be validated further if teachers are to use it.

A study on the psychological well-being of teachers is important, given that teaching is believed to be one of the most stressful occupations. The influence of teachers in the lives of students is well documented in literature, and it is, therefore, important to study factors affecting their psychological well-being at work.

Theoretically, this study represents an attempt to clarify the acceptability of the engine model of well-being. As used in this study, the engine model provided an overarching framework that underpins the relationships of variables: (a) inputs, (b) processes, and (c) outcomes. This simplistic framework provided an opportunity to examine if inputs (perseverance of effort - PER, consistency of interest - CON, and adaptability to the situation – ADA) can influence or trigger a process (teacher emotion (TE) affecting the outcomes (psychological well-being). The researcher wants to note that this model has not been tested in the past, which can be a good opportunity to move the literature forward in terms of teachers' well-being in the Asian context by studying Filipino teachers. This piece of work is important because it becomes a starting point for local researchers to get involved in the scholarly discussion of teachers' well-being in Asia.

Practically, this study is important in several ways. This study could be an opportunity to help address the limited literature on Filipino teachers' psychological well-being. It is noted that Southeast Asians are underrepresented in the community of psychology and education literature, which limits our understanding of the extent to which the findings in the west can be extended to the east, like the Philippines. The Philippines is one of the East Asian countries that makes a relevant case for investigating the well-being of teachers. This study can be a pipeline in getting involved in the scholarly discussion of the psychological well-being of Filipino teachers compared to other teachers worldwide, as this variable has taken the attention of researchers. Results of this study are hoped to catch the attention of school administrators to develop a wellness program for teachers to allow them to thrive in a challenging world of teaching. Supporting the well-being of teachers (and school administrators alike) fosters a culture of psychological health in which healthy work behaviors are supported, encouraged, and strengthened. It is desirable to have teachers who thrive in schools, demonstrate interpersonal fit at work, feel competent, feel recognized for their achievements, and desire to get involved in achieving the school's goals.

Research Questions

This two-phase study has predictive (model-testing) and exploratory (group comparison) elements. It tested the hypothesized relationships and explored the structural relationships of input, process, and outcomes through structural equations modeling (SEM) involving a large number of teachers in Palawan State University. This study revolved around two sets of questions. The first phase (model testing) of this study clarified the interface of the input, process, and outcome levels within the framework of the engine of well-being theory. Specifically, the first set of questions was developed:

1. Do grit dimensions (e.g., perseverance of effort - PER, consistency of interest - CON, and adaptability to the situation - ADA) relate to teacher emotion?
2. Is this work behavior related to psychological well-being (e.g., feeling of competency-FOC, desire for involvement at work-DIW, interpersonal fit at work-IFW, perceived recognition at work-PRW, and thriving at work-TAW) of teachers?
3. Does grit directly affect teachers' psychological well-being (direct effect), or is it mediated by the psychological process: teachers' emotions (indirect effect)?

After establishing the model fit, the second phase (group comparison) intended to delineate differences in the variables that composed the model by comparing teachers using the following grouping variables. The following questions were raised:

4. How similar or different are the grit dimension, teacher emotion, and psychological well-being of teachers when grouped according to colleges of Palawan State University: College of Arts and Humanities, College of Sciences, College of Teacher Education, College of Business and Accountancy, College of Hospitality, Management and Tourism, College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology, College of Nursing and Health Services, College of Criminal Justice Education, and College of Community Resources and Development (North and South); and
5. What faculty well-being program (FWP) can be developed for specific groups of teachers in Palawan State University? (Note: This is not a research question but an outcome of this research where, based on the results, the researcher formulated potential FWP.)

Methodology

The nature of the research problems raised in this investigation lent to a quantitative research design. Quantitative research refers to the systematic empirical investigation of social phenomena via statistical, mathematical, or numerical data or computational techniques. The process of measurement was central to quantitative research because it provided the fundamental connection between empirical observation and the mathematical expression of quantitative relationships.

This study involved the 626 faculty from the laboratory elementary school, laboratory high school, and different colleges of PSU's main campus, and Extramural Studies Centers in Northern and Southern Palawan. Of these 626 teachers, 236 (37.7%) were males, and 363 (58%) were females. There were 27 (4.3%) teachers who did not report their sex. These teachers had a mean age of 35.22 years old ($SD = 10.83$; $min = 20$ years old, $max = 68$ years old). The need to develop a faculty wellbeing program for teachers in Palawan dictated the identification of the research locale, which is Palawan State University. Participants were those teachers employed during the SY 2018-2019, regardless of their employment status.

The Triarchic Model of Grit Scale (TMGS; Datu, Yuen, & Chen, 2017) was used in this study. TMGS has three dimensions: perseverance of effort (3 items, e.g., "I am a hard worker"), consistency of interests (3 items, "New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones"), and adaptability to situations (3 items, "Changes in life often make me change my plans for the future"). Items in this scale were contextualized in the teaching profession.

Teacher emotions, which refer to the emotions felt by the teachers in carrying out their teaching profession, were estimated using the Teacher Emotion Inventory (Chen, 2016). There are five subscales of this measure representing two positive emotions: joy (7 items, "I am motivated by students' care"), love (4 items, "I love my teaching job because I could see how our next generation grows up, which is different from other jobs"), and three negative emotions: sadness (4 items, "I feel sad when my students fire up at me"), anger ("4 items, "I am annoyed when I am misunderstood by parents"), and fear (7 items, "I feel pressured from the high expectations of parents").

Psychological well-being at work, which refers to the psychological well-being of the teachers in Palawan State University, in which central to this investigation is understanding what factors account for predicting the psychological well-being of teachers, is a construct describing an individual's subjective positive work experience and is indexed by five eudemonic dimensions: interpersonal fit at work, thriving at work, a feeling of competency, perceived recognition at work, and a desire for involvement at work. This is an outcome/endogenous variable of this study.

The researcher sought permission from the University President to conduct the study. Permission to gather data was also sought from the Principals of Laboratory Elementary, Junior High, and Senior High schools, College Deans of the main campus, Directors of north and south campuses, and Vice President for External Campuses of Palawan State University for the administration of questionnaires to the teachers under their supervision. Data collection was conducted personally by the researcher with the help of an aide.

For preliminary analysis of quantitative data, prior to the main analyses, all the variables were examined through SPSS version 24 for the accuracy of data entry, missing values, the normality of distributions, and outliers. Estimates of internal consistency were also examined using Cronbach's alpha.

The structural relationships between the latent variables and their corresponding observed variables were examined through Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) via structural equation modeling (SEM) through AMOS 24. Model fit was established using the following fit indices: (a) the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), (b) the comparative fit index (CFI), (c) normed fit index (NFI), incremental fit index (IFI), (d) Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and (e) the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA; Bentler, 1990; Hu, & Bentler, 1999). Values above 0.90 for NFI, CFI, TLI, and IFI are deemed acceptable, while RMSEA and SRMR should be below 0.08 (Byrne, 2010).

Results and Discussion

Examining the Psychometric Integrity of Measurement Models

A preliminary analysis centered on examining the psychometric acceptability of the primary scales. The examination of the psychometric integrity of the scales is the first important step to clarifying whether the scale, especially those developed in the west, has cross-cultural validity.

Table 1. *Summary of Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Scales*

Scale	Chi-square	Df	Chi-square/df	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	TLI	CFI	IFI
GRIT Scale	99.411	24	4.142	.07	.97	.94	.93	.95	.95
Teacher emotion scale	624.731	124	5.038	.08	.90	.90	.90	.92	.92
Psychological well-being at work	1082.428	264	4.100	.07	.90	.90	.90	.91	.91
Interpretation Guide	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-significant	-	-	-	.08 or below	.90 and above (Bentler, 1990)				

Note: RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; GFI – goodness-of-fit index; NFI – normed-fit index; TLI – Tucker-Lewis index; IFI – incremental fit index; CFI – comparative fit index.

The confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) performed on the four scales: Grit Scale, Teacher Emotion Scale, Commitment Scale revised, and psychological well-being at work scale provided support to the acceptability of their factor structure. As shown in Table 1, all fit indices satisfy the minimum criteria.

Relationships of Grit, Teacher Emotion, and Psychological Well-Being at Work

To prepare for the mediation, an important initial step performed in this investigation is the examination of the relationship of all the study variables, including grit (independent variable), teacher emotion (mediator), commitment to the occupation (mediator), and psychological well-being (dependent variable).

Teacher emotion is another variable structurally positioned as a mediator in the hypothesized theoretical model. Based on Chen's (2016) conceptualization, teacher emotion is underpinned by five manifest variables with valence: positive (joy and love) and negative (sadness, anger, and fear).

Additionally, psychological well-being at work (PWBW) is a psychological construct underpinned by five dimensions: interpersonal fit at work, thriving at work, feeling of competency, perceived recognition at work, and desire for involvement at work (Dagenais-Demerais & Sovie, 2011; McInerney, Ganotice, King, Morin, & Marsh, 2015). In this study, it was hypothesized that these five dimensions would be predicted by the dimensions of grit.

Series of multiple regression analyses were used to test if grit dimensions significantly predicted teachers' psychological well-being. The results of the regression indicated that the three predictors explained 5% to 28% (R^2) of the variance in predicting teachers' psychological well-being. What emerged to be the strong predictor of teachers' psychological well-being is perseverance of effort, where it significantly predicted all indicators of psychological well-being, including desire for involvement at work, feeling of competency, interpersonal fit at work, thriving at work, and perceived recognition at work. Consistency of interest was the second next important predictor, but similar to adaptability to the situation, it did not significantly predict teachers' perceived recognition at work.

After establishing the relationships between (1) the independent variable (grit) and mediators (commitment and emotion), between (2) the independent variable (grit) and the dependent variable (psychological well-being), and between (3) the mediators (commitment and emotion) and psychological well-being, the next important step is to estimate the indirect effect model by putting all these variables into one model through structural equation modeling (SEM).

It was hypothesized that the relationship between teachers' grit (passion in the pursuit of a long-term goal) and psychological well-being would be mediated by teacher emotion. Using structural equation modeling (SEM), the researcher estimated the indirect effect model, suggesting the interface of grit → emotion → psychological well-being. Based on data from a representative sample of 626

PSU teachers, SEM results provided support for the hypothesized model (Figure 1). To reiterate, it was hypothesized (hypothesis 3) that the relationship between teachers' grit and psychological well-being would be mediated by teacher emotion. In other words, the relationships of grit and well-being are established via teacher emotion (indirect effect model).

Results suggest that only two dimensions of grit (perseverance of effort and adaptability to situations) significantly predicted teachers' psychological well-being via teacher positive emotions (joy and love). Consistency of interest (for grit) and three indicators of teacher emotions (e.g., sadness, anger, and fear) did not significantly contribute to predicting teachers' psychological well-being at work.

The decomposition of direct, indirect, and total effects of the structural relationships among grit → teacher emotion → psychological well-being at work is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Standardized Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects in the Final Model

Predictor	Criterion	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
Grit	Psychological well-being	-	.53**	.53**
Teacher emotion	Teacher emotion	.66**	-	.66**
Teacher emotion	Psychological well-being	.81**	-	.81**

Note: ** $p < .0148$

The researcher estimated the indirect effect of grit on psychological well-being at work with teacher emotion as a mediator. The present data provided support to this assumption, as the direct path from grit to psychological well-being was insignificant (Figure 1). Teachers' grit did not directly influence the formation of teachers' psychological well-being at work. Instead, grit developed positive emotions related to teaching (joy and love) in them, which then influenced the formation of their psychological well-being at work. Figure 2 demonstrates full mediation.⁴⁹ Hypothesis 3 is, therefore, accepted.

Implications of the Findings

There are interesting implications developed from this study. In terms of the interface of grit (perseverance and passion for long-term goals) → emotion → psychological well-being, the findings of the present study imply that the relationship of these variables can be directional, and teacher emotion can fully mediate the relationship between grit and psychological well-being. This is an interesting result with strong psychological value for psychologists and practitioners. This suggests that teachers' passion to realize long-term goals (e.g., promotion or becoming a university professor maybe) does not directly influence their psychological well-being. The pathway is grit → emotion → psychological well-being. To say it differently, teachers with a strong desire to realize enduring long-term goals (i.e., grit) find joy and love in teaching (emotions), which eventually would develop psychological well-being. To state it further, psychological well-being is derived from emotions (joy and love) in teaching, which are the products of grit or perseverance and passion for long-term goals. This implies that for teachers to achieve psychological well-being, they need to have grit to develop positive emotions about teaching.

Noteworthy is the differential power of teacher emotion to the occupation as mediators between the theoretical relationship between grit and psychological well-being. Teacher emotion totally weakened the relationship between grit and psychological well-being when it was included as a mediator in the hypothesized relation. This implies that teachers' desire to endure long-term goals (i.e., gritty teachers) does not directly develop psychological well-being in teachers immediately. Instead, grit develops positive emotions which then become instrumental for them to attain psychological well-being at work.

Another finding of theoretical importance relates to examining the Triarchic Model of Grit Scale (TMGS), which was explored by Datu, Mantak, and Chen (2017), involving undergraduate students. This study was the first to explore the model involving schoolteachers. Interestingly, results provided support to the triarchic grit model, which is different from the model espoused by Duckworth et al. (2007). These are interesting research developments in the growing intellectual conversation of grit.

Overall, the results of the study may be framed to suggest developing a wellness and psychological well-being program for the Palawan State University academic community. The results of this study may not necessarily be enough to establish the need for developing such a program. However, given that other researchers have already uncovered some important psychological constructs (employee work commitment, positive psychological capital) that examined the psychological and well-being needs of the PSU community, these empirical data may be enough to inform and trigger the development of a program for PSU.

The findings somehow invite PSU administrators to examine the need for offering such a program and champion its implementation. The program can serve as a model faculty welfare program that other institutions can benchmark, especially when the results are promising. In addition, given that the PSU offers degree programs in Psychology and Social Work, a wellness and well-being program serves as a pipeline where students get to see the link of how psychological theories are applied in practical programs.

Conclusions

Based on the preceding discussions of the results, several conclusions were drawn from this investigation. Grit among teachers influences their teacher's emotions. Grit also influenced the development of teachers' psychological well-being at work. Teacher emotions fully mediated the relationship between grit and psychological well-being at work.



Based on the findings and conclusions made, the following are recommended: Test the derived model with a bigger sample size to clarify deviations from the derived model. Testing the derived model in different contexts (e.g., public vs. private schools, sectarian vs. non-sectarian schools) is expected to refine the model more. Future studies may consider exploring the effect of demographic variables, e.g., age, status of appointment, and academic rank, on the grit, commitment, emotion, and psychological well-being of teachers. School administrators need to reflect on the proposed wellness and psychological well-being program tailored-fit to the needs of the PSU community. The researcher feels the need for this program, especially for university settings.

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