

Becoming a teacher teaching and learning simultaneously: Exploring the well-being of Indonesian in-service teachers during online teacher professional development programs

A. G. Tamrin^{1*}, Nur Arifah Draji², Anis Handayani³ and Kristian Adi Putra⁴

¹ Department of Building Engineering Education, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

² Department of English Education, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia

³ Department of English Education, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

⁴ Department of English, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

*Corresponding author: A. G. Tamrin

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Abstract

Teacher well-being is crucial for fostering effective and sustainable teaching practices, yet it is often challenged by various factors, such as excessive teacher workload. This study examines the well-being of in-service teachers in Indonesia who maintained their full-time teaching responsibilities while participating in an online teacher professional development (oTPD) program. A total of 562 teachers in the program completed an online 17-item Likert-scale questionnaire and ten participants were purposively selected and invited for a series of follow-up semi structured interviews. Despite the challenges to manage the two roles, the participants reported high levels of well-being. They maintain their well-being by sustaining their positive emotions and seeking support from others. The finding suggests that teacher well-being can be maintained through effective coping mechanism strategies. It also highlights the need to design a more flexible and supportive oTPD program that acknowledges teacher's professional and personal constraints. Further implications for well-being-centered pedagogical practices and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: In-service teachers, Online teacher professional development, PERMA, Teacher well-being

1. Introduction

A prior study Gu and Day (2007) ^[1] reported that teaching is recognized as a profession with a high risk of burnout. Teachers are frequently faced various challenges, such as misbehaving students (Aldrup *et al.*, 2018) ^[2], inadequate school management support, heavy workload, and low social recognition (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2006) ^[3]. To maintain teacher well-being defined as “a positive emotional state that emphasizes that teachers pursue feelings of pleasure while avoiding feelings of pain on the one hand and pursue personal fulfilment and realization on the other hand” (Liang *et al.*, 2020) ^[4]—several factors are essential, such as job satisfaction, self-efficacy, aspiration, motivation, and authority (Yıldırım, 2014) ^[5]. Furthermore, better teacher well-being is found to be associated with better student wellbeing and lower student psychological distress (Harding *et al.*, 2019) ^[6]. Therefore, it is critical to support teacher well-being as high levels of teacher well-being affect positively the quality of students' learning outcomes. Among various strategies, Teacher Professional Development (TPD) is recognized as one of the effective means to enhance and maintain teacher well-being (Yıldırım, 2014) ^[5].

Teacher Professional Development (TPD) plays a critical role in enhancing teachers' pedagogical competence and professional growth. In Indonesia, participation in TPD is mandatory for teachers seeking for teacher certification. This

program is not limited to pre-service teachers who are preparing for their teaching profession, but also extends to in-service teachers to develop and improve their teaching professionalism and competences. As a result, in service teachers have dual roles, as teachers and TPD participants, which can significantly affect their well-being. During COVID-19 pandemic, the TPD program in Indonesia was conducted virtually to reduce teachers' travel and exposure to the virus. While it offers some benefits, such as flexibility and accessibility across geographical boundaries (Annetta & Shymansky, 2008; Dede *et al.*, 2009) ^[7, 8], it also created some challenges. Teachers from remote areas or under resource regions often struggled with limited digital infrastructure and lack of training in ICT, which might cause stress and hinder their active participation in the TPD program (Fernández-Batanero *et al.*, 2020) ^[9].

As prior studies have shown, teacher well-being is crucial for effective teaching practices. Therefore, it is important to explore how teachers experience and maintain their well-being, particularly in this context where teachers have dual roles as full-time teachers and Teacher Professional Development (TPD) participants. This study aims to investigate the well-being of Indonesian in-service teachers who are simultaneously teaching at schools and participating in a mandatory online Teacher Professional Development (oTPD) program. It was guided by the following research questions:

- What was the level of teacher well-being among the participants in the oTPD program?
- How did the in-service teachers maintain their well-being while participating in the oTPD program?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Context of the study

This exploratory case study was conducted in one public

university in Indonesia. This study took the data in the classes of a mandatory oTPD program, also known as *Program Pelatihan Guru* (PPG), which was conducted virtually in this pandemic era of Covid-19. This oTPD program was conducted in three months from August to September 2022. Each meeting consists of three-hours virtual meeting supported by Google Meet application. Table 1 shows the activities done in the classes of this program.

Table 1: The Activities in The oTPD

No	Main competence	Activity	Duration (days)
1	Analyzing problems-based materials, numeracy literacy, and high order thinking skills (HOTS)	Identifying problems in teaching and learning process	3
		Exploring the causes of the problems	6
		Determining the causes of the problems	3
2	Designing innovative lesson plan	Exploring alternative solution	3
		Determining the solution	3
		Creating lesson plan	3
		Creating evaluation plan and conducting peer teaching	3
3	Comprehensive test	-	3
4	Innovative lesson practices	Practicing the lesson plan (cycle 1)	13
		Practicing the lesson plan (cycle 2)	13
		Final reflection and follow-up plan	3

A total of 931 teachers from 13 majors: plant agribusiness (n=35), Indonesian education (n=35), English education (n=35), Javanese education (n=35), counselling and guidance (n=35), office management (n=25), early childhood teacher education (n=70), elementary teacher education (n=385), physical education (n=105), special education (n=35), Pancasila and civic education (n=70), computer and information engineering (n=35), construction and property technology (n=31) joined this oTPD program.

2.2 Research instrument

The questioners cover 17 items adapted from 5 aspects of teacher well-being: positive emotion, engagement, social relationship, meaning, and achievement proposed by Mercer and Gregersen (2020)^[10] with Likert scale of very disagree (1) to very agree (5). The items in the questionnaires were translated in Indonesian by professional translators to ease the participants in understanding the content. As a pilot testing was performed to 30 participants, Cronbach alpha of 0.92 was obtained and ensured the instrument reliability. After the questionnaire results were obtained, the interview protocols were developed accordingly. The items seek to confirm and

gain additional information from the participants regarding the questionnaire results (E.g., *why do you enjoy joining this oTPD?* etc.)

2.3 Data collection

Before we collected the data, a research consent was given to the oTPD participants informing the aims of the study, its procedure in collecting and analyzing the data, and how the data would be presented in published academic article. A total of 562 consisting of female (69.9%) and male (30.1%) within age of 20–30-year-old (36.8%), 30–40-year-old (60.1%), and 40–50-year-old (3.1%) filled the questionnaire to measure their teacher well-being while joining the oTPD program. Among those, 10 selected participants were separately in-depth interviewed to give additional information of their teacher well-being. Table 2 summarizes the interview participants' demography. Furthermore, to minimize the risk of covid-19 exposure and due to distance limitation, the interviews were conducted virtually using zoom meeting. Each interview lasted for about 15 minutes. Furthermore, each interview was recorded, with the participants' agreement, to ease the data transcription and analysis.

Table 2: The interview participants' demography

Participant code	Gender	Age	School level	Teaching experience (year)	Major	Teacher well-being value
Teacher A1	F	30	Junior high	8	English	85
Teacher A2	F	32	Junior high	7	English	85
Teacher A3	M	38	High school	8	Social study	84
Teacher A4	F	43	Elementary	17	Elementary teacher education	84
Teacher A5	M	40	High school	14	Indonesian	84
Teacher B1	M	37	Junior high	12	English	74
Teacher B2	M	34	Elementary	10	Elementary teacher education	74
Teacher B3	F	29	High school	7	Physical education	72
Teacher B4	F	46	Elementary	18	Elementary teacher education	70
Teacher B5	F	36	Junior high	11	Special education	69

2.4 Data analysis

The data of 562 responses to the given questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics to find out the teacher well-being while joining the oTPD. Meanwhile, transcripts of the 10 interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis under the themes of 5 aspects of teacher well-being: positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and achievement proposed by Mercer and Gregersen (2020) [10]. The analysis was conducted using Atlas.ti separately by two researchers. Once the analysis finished, two researchers discussed the results and

compromised to the final data analysis results. The data were then put into tables to ease the data interpretation. Last, the conclusion was drawn out from the data analysis.

3. Results

3.1 In-service teachers' well-being

From the questionnaire, it was found that teacher well-being in this study was quite high as shown by descriptive statistic result in table 2 below.

Table 3: The Result of descriptive statistics analysis

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic						
Score of wellbeing	562	21	64	85	46338	82.45	3.788
Valid N (listwise)	562						

With the highest value of 85, it was found that the mean is 82.45 which indicates that teachers were able to maintain their well-being while joining the oTPD and teaching their students simultaneously. Furthermore, the teachers here were reportedly satisfied with their learning in the oTPD and maintain their well-being when they also need to teacher their students.

The first is positive emotion. Covering three items of the questionnaire, teachers reportedly felt happy while joining the oTPD program (87.2 %, 490 participants) and highly motivated in joining the oTPD activities (86.7%, 467 participants). This finding indicates that oTPD has potential in fostering teacher well-being particularly in maintaining teachers' positive emotion during their participation in the oTPD activities. Furthermore, teachers reported their positive emotion in joining the oTPD since they expected gaining new insights and having positive academic guidance from the excellent lecturers. The teacher said, *"I am happy (in participating in the oTPD). There I will get new knowledge and guidance from excellent lecturers"* (Teacher A1).

Besides, the teachers also made use of the oTPD to reflect on their knowledge and skills on the content and pedagogic skills. They somehow demonstrated how they would get new experiences nowhere else they could get from the oTPD and fostered their professionalism in teaching and learning process. The teacher said, *"When I joining the oTPD, I reflected on my competence, for example, on how I teach my students. Then, I realized that my competence is lacking and I become motivated to enhance my competence"* (Teacher A4)

Some teachers were also happy in joining in the oTPD due to its feature in facilitating and expanding teachers' social relationship. They frequently reported that they built new friendship among teachers within the oTPD. They shared insights, academic problems, and how to solve those problems by having discussion among themselves. The teacher said, *"Because I got new good friends. It feels so nice to me"* (Teacher B2),

The second is engagement. In case of engagement within the oTPD, teachers were also reported to have high engagement proven by 498 (88.6%) strongly agreed that they were fully

participated in the oTPD activities. They were further reported that they mainly understood the lecturers' explanation in class (74.4%, 418 participants) and enjoyed their learning process in the oTPD (81.1%, 456 participants). Accordingly, their interviews show similar results. The teachers reported that they enjoyed sharing and discussing materials with other teachers and lecturers. They somehow felt the urge to upgrade their knowledge and skills from participating in the oTPD. Also, they frequently had chats and discussion with other teachers to solve their teaching problems. The teacher said, *"It's rather interesting to have discussion and share materials among other participants, so I try to participate actively in every activity"* (teacher A2) and *"it's purely my intention to upgrade my knowledge that I decided to have active participation in the program"* (Teacher A1)

However, some teachers were motivated to participate actively in the oTPD due to their thinking of achieving teacher certificate in the end of the program. It indicates they were kind of 'forced' to join this oTPD to get teacher certificate which is obligatory to achieve better financial support. This certificate can be used to apply for certificated teacher position which has better financial support than their current teacher position as temporary teachers. Interestingly, it indicates that teachers did not really engage in the learning because they enjoyed it, rather they were 'forced' to enjoy it. The teacher said, *"We will get teacher certificate after we participated in the program, so yeah, we need to join this program"* (Teacher A5).

Besides, the teachers' fear of getting bad score also motivated them to have active participation. They somehow tried their best at doing the assignments and test that they would have a good result. It somehow reflects negative engagement of teacher well-being in which they are 'under pressured' to get great score. The teacher said, *"Bad score, I need avoid it as much as possible (laugh)"* (Teacher B4)

The third is relationship. In this oTPD, teachers were able to main their relationship particularly with other participants and the lecturers. The teachers and their lecturers were reported to respect different opinions (94.5%, 531 participants), respect each other (96.8%, 544 participants), and trust the other

participants and the lecturers (81.1%, 456 participants). Furthermore, the lecturers here were reported to reexplained things the participants did not comprehend yet (88.8%, 499 participants). Accordingly, 497 participants (88.4%) strongly agreed that they had good communication with other participants and the lecturers. The teachers worked together and give advices to other participants to solve their problems (89.9%, 505 participants). This finding is further strengthened by the interviews' results reporting that teachers got new colleagues and expand their life circle trough joining the oTPD. The teacher said, "*Getting new colleagues is one benefit of joining this program*" (teacher A3) and "*I managed to have new colleagues as well as enhance my competence as a professional teacher by discussing teaching strategies etc. with them*" (Teacher B2).

The teachers were also reported that they have good relationship with other teachers and the lecturers. They frequently had discussion on how they solve their teaching problems and built trust with each other. They were aware of their difference in competence and personality and respect each other within the program. They further demonstrated the positive learning atmosphere in the oTPD. The teacher said, "*I like discussing my problems with colleagues in the program since I think they may experience the similar problem.*" (Teacher B3) and "*I often asked my lecturers on how to handle my class and misbehaving students. I got satisfied explanation from them.*" (Teacher A1)

The fourth is meaning. Teachers developed stronger teacher agency by joining this oTPD (96.8%, 544 participants). They were highly motivated to be a better teacher after joining this oTPD. Also, they were satisfied when they got to complete their tasks appropriately (89.3%, 502 participants) and highly believed that they could finish this program well (73.5%, 413 participants). Their interviews similarly demonstrate their persistent belief that they can become a better teacher after joining this oTPD. They reported that they received valuable and insightful knowledge from the oTPD which was believed to be beneficial for them to sustain their teaching professionalism. The teacher said, "*I got knowledge that I can apply to my own class. I don't think I can get this kind of knowledge elsewhere.*" (Teacher B1)

Also, the lecturers' guidance and motivation for the teacher foster their teacher identity. They were reportedly more satisfied with their identity as teachers and enjoyed their profession. It indicates that teachers did not only get knowledge of teaching but also motivation to be more respective to their teacher identity. The teacher said, "*My lecturers sometimes tell me valuable life experience as teacher and it somehow motivates me to be prouder about my profession.*" (Teacher A4)

The fifth is achievement. By joining this oTPD, teachers were highly satisfied with the learning process in the oTPD (82.4%, 463 participants). Also, they were proud to be their current state of becoming teachers (72.4%, 407 participants). The teachers here reported that they felt satisfaction when they can finish their assignments in the oTPD and get good score. Also, the small appreciation from the lecturers and other participants

such as praises strengthens their satisfaction feeling when joining the program. The teacher said, "*Our lecturer and other teachers commonly gave us applause, for example, after we gave presentation. It ... felt nice.*" (Teacher A3)

However, some teachers reported that some policy of the programs need to be fixed to fulfil their satisfaction. They reported that inconsistent time for online meetings hinder them in enjoying the learning. Since it is an online program, the lecturers sometime change the time schedule to ineffective time, for instance, to 7 P.M in the evening when it should the rest time and family time. This inconvenience was particularly felt by teacher A4 who has three children she needs to take care of. The teacher said, "*Sometimes the class was conducted in the evening when I should take my children to sleep. It decreased my motivation to join the class and concentrated in learning.*" (Teacher A4)

3.2 Maintaining teacher well-being

As the teachers here need to attend their professional development program as well as teach their students, maintaining their well-being becomes crucial in balancing their life as an oTPD student and a teacher. Some teachers used emotion-focused coping strategy to maintain their well-being in which they focused on how to control their emotion. As the most realistic reason, they maintained positive mind regarding the oTPD since it would take them to a better teaching environment when they received their professional teacher certificate. In Indonesia, teachers with this certificate will have more opportunity to acquire better life support than those without it. Furthermore, it was found that they considered this oTPD as a place to sustain their professionalism which would be beneficial for their career as a teacher, so they were able to enjoy the learning process in the oTPD. The teacher said, "*We will be a better teacher. We will know more about how to teach our students. That's what I always think while joining this program.*" (Teacher A1)

However, this double status, as a student and a teacher, frequently hinder them in doing their activities effectively. Teacher B4 for instance needs to manage her classes while attending the oTPD virtually. To be able to manage her class, she used problem-focused coping in which she frequently gave tasks for her students that she could attend the program. She reportedly felt guilty for the students, but she manages her positive emotion as she believed that this oTPD program would indirectly give positive impact to the students in the future. The teacher said, "*I was sad and guilty when I left my students for attending this program. However, I try to think positively that what I get from this program will also be beneficial and helpful for my students later.*" (Teacher B4)

Also, as their program was conducted virtually, sometime it was conducted in the evening in which it should be their resting or family time. To maintain their well-being, teachers here asked for their family support that they could attend the program continuously. It happened to teacher B4, the one with three children. She reported that her husband would be the one handling her children that she could attend the program effectively. It indicates that teacher well-being, particularly for

married teachers with children, to have family support to manage their participation and maintain their well-being. The teacher said, “*Fortunately, I have my husband who always help me handle my children that I can concentrate in participating in the program.*” (Teacher B4)

4. Discussion

The findings indicate that the in-service teachers were able to maintain their well-being despite managing two different roles as a participant in the oTPD program and a teacher in their schools. Although many reported fatigue, teachers maintained their positive emotions during their participation in the oTPD activities. The teachers in this study reported their high motivation in participating in this program since it provides them new knowledge they never learned before. It indicates that oTPD somehow develop teacher well-being, particularly in the professionalism as a teacher.

This finding is in line with Wolf *et al.*'s (2019) [11] in which teacher education has positive impact to the teachers' professionalism. Additionally, some features of the oTPD help them in maintaining their well-being. As this oTPD required active participation and a lot of discussion among participants, it somehow helps teachers in sharing knowledge, solving their teaching problems, and expanding their social circle. This finding is consistent with Yildirim *et al.* (2022) [12] and Singh and Mahapatra (2022) [13] in which teachers may improve their knowledge by participating in such TPD and interacting with other participants. Also, their ease of expanding social relationship in the oTPD supports their positive emotion during their participation. Tebben *et al.* (2021) [14] further reported that social relationship with colleague in school is an important aspect in maintain teacher well-being.

Positive emotion was reported to one of main factors influencing teacher well-being. Teachers here mainly think their obligation to participate in the program as their way to improve their professionalism. Taking into account of the challenges they faced during their participation, it was found that teachers saw those problems as a chance for their professional growth and learning, comparable to Stang-Rabrig *et al.*'s (2022) [15]. Furthermore, teachers were reported to acquire more confidence in teaching since they acquired a lot of pedagogical knowledge from the oTPD. This finding somehow mediates Yang's (2019) [16] that having prior experience in professional education improve teacher self-efficacy and how teachers maintain their well-being. It indicates that acquiring high self-efficacy of teaching will maintain teacher well-being in the class. It was also supported by Li *et al.* (2022) [17] that teachers' positive emotions decrease stress and maintain teacher well-being. It indicates that exhaustion does not decrease their motivation in teaching and learning when they can face it with positive mind.

However, during their participation in the program, the teachers encountered problems which potentially influenced their well-being. One of main problems is that they need to act as two different-position as a student of oTPD and a teacher for their class. Furthermore, despite their occupied time for

participating in the oTPD, teachers here manage to fulfil their duty as full-time teachers. They frequently seek for help from other teachers to handle their class while they are participating in the program. Furthermore, they will also handle the colleague teachers' class when they are unable to attend their class. As Tebben *et al.* (2021) [14] reported, teachers need other teachers' support to maintain their well-being. These positive thinking of 'having extra hand' keep teachers' mind positive and relieve their stress.

Another one is when they have piled tasks in their school as well as in their oTPD program. This situation somehow develops stress for the teachers. To keep their positive mind, they frequently recall their positive memory of being a teacher to decrease their stress. This finding supports Tebben *et al.*'s (2021) [14] that other teachers' and students' positive comments keep teachers' motivation and decrease their stress. Similarly, in this current study, other teachers often give applause that reinforces teachers' motivation in participating actively in the program. Furthermore, a 'soul calling' to become a better teacher also keep them in place while facing this problem. They have high motivation to become a teacher as they expect high of this career. This finding is somehow similar with Richter *et al.* (2021) [18] that teachers are motivated to become a teacher mainly due to teacher career aspiration. Furthermore, they also reported that career aspiration has positive correlation with teacher well-being which means that teachers with intentional aspiration to be a teacher have better well-being than those 'coincidentally' becomes teachers. This current study's finding of maintained teacher well-being while participating in the program and teaching their students due to their high motivation of becoming a teacher somehow gives a new insight on the factors influencing teacher well-being. This finding also indicates that teachers with good mind and motivation in becoming a teacher will be less exhausted in doing their jobs as they heartly like the job.

This study also reported that ways teachers cope with their problems are different potentially depending on their personality and other contextual factors, similarly found by Von Känel *et al.* (2009) [19] and Nizielski *et al.* (2013) [20]. Teachers with good self-efficacy attempt to cope their problems without seeking for helps from others. Meanwhile, some teachers solve their problems supported by friends, colleagues, or family.

5. Conclusion

This current study examined the well-being of Indonesian in-service teachers who were simultaneously teaching while participating in an online Teacher Professional Development (oTPD) program. Despite the challenges of fulfilling the two roles, the participants reported that they were able to sustain their high level of well-being. Although they sometimes felt exhausted, they were successful in maintaining their well-being with some strategies, such as sustaining a positive mindset, seeking help from others to handle their additional responsibilities, and recalling positive experiences to sustain their positive emotion. The ways in which teachers cope with

their challenges may vary depending on individual and contextual factors, an area that still needs further investigation. By exploring the well-being of in-service teachers who were concurrently teaching while participating in an oTPD program, this study contributes to a relatively underexplored area in educational research. The findings offer practical insights for stakeholders, such as policy makers, school administrators, and oTPD developers in designing more flexible and supportive oTPD programs that better promote teacher well-being.

Further studies could expand on these findings by examining pre-service teachers, exploring face-to-face or hybrid TPD models, and conducting comparative studies across different groups of participants, regions, and educational contexts. Additionally, incorporating statistical analysis to identify the key factors that influence teacher well-being may also be considered to deepen our understanding of the interplay between workload, teacher well-being, teaching burnout, and professional development.

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