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Perma Model and EFL Teachers' Well-Being: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to review recent researches from 2019 to 2024 related to the application of the PERMA model to have deeper insights about EFL teachers' well-being. Based on the PRISMA guidelines, the review analyses findings from those studies focusing on Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement. The review highlights how each factor brings positive effects to teachers' well-being and the effectiveness of their teaching. It aims to find out the strengths and limitations of the current studies and fill in the gap in literature in this field. The result will offer practical applications of the framework to enhance the well-being of EFL teachers. Google Scholar is used to include the recent studies which are published in English. Further research should include a wide range of databases and study how this model has been applied in different educational contexts and diverse cultures to achieve the generalizability in this field.

Keywords: PERMA, PRISMA, well-being

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Introduction

The topic of the well-being of EFL teachers has become prominent in educational research in recent years. The high levels of well-being are important for the overall quality of education. Teachers' well-being positively impacts collegial support and enhances students' academic performance (Mercer, 2021). Consequently, fostering teachers' well-being is beneficial not only for educators but also for their students, underscoring its importance in educational settings (Mercer, 2020).

In the EFL context, teachers' well-being is often compromised by various factors, including inadequate language skills, low confidence, and heavy workloads (Mousavi, 2007; Talbot & Mercer, 2018; Clipa & Boghean, 2015). However, constructs such as resilience and self-efficacy have been identified as crucial supports for teachers' well-being. Flourishing, in particular, involves not only managing stress but also embracing positive qualities that help teachers navigate challenges effectively (Greenfield, 2015). Despite the increasing attention to PP and teachers' well-being, research in this area has predominantly focused on negative emotions, with limited exploration of positive emotions and their impact on the language learning process (Lantolf & Swain, 2019). Additionally, there remains a lack of comprehensive

research that provides a deeper understanding of EFL teachers' perceptions of well-being and the factors influencing it.

The PERMA model, developed by Seligman (2011), promotes well-being through five key elements: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement. Each element enhances teachers' well-being and classroom effectiveness. Positive Emotions, such as joy and gratitude, build resilience and foster a positive outlook, helping EFL teachers manage stress and create a conducive learning environment (Fredrickson, 2001). Engagement, or being deeply involved in challenging activities, leads to a state of flow. EFL teachers can achieve this through innovative teaching methods and professional development, resulting in greater satisfaction and motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Relationships, emphasizing social connections, are vital for EFL teachers' well-being. Positive relationships with colleagues and students reduce isolation and enhance collaboration (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Meaning, or having a sense of purpose, provides fulfillment and job satisfaction for EFL teachers by highlighting the impact of their work (Seligman, 2011). Achievement, involving the pursuit and attainment of goals, boosts teachers' sense of accomplishment and self-efficacy, enhancing confidence and motivation (Bandura, 1997). Implementing the PERMA model in educational settings can significantly enhance the well-being of EFL teachers.

The purpose of this paper is to review recent researches from 2019 to 2024 related to the application of the PERMA model to have deeper insights about EFL teachers' well-being. Based on the PRISMA guidelines, the review analyses findings from those studies related to Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement. The review highlights how each factor brings positive effects to the teachers' well-being and the effectiveness of their teaching. It aims to find out the strengths and limitations of the current studies and fill in the gap in literature in this field. The research question is "How has the PERMA framework informed about the well-being of EFL teachers?". The result will offer practical applications of this model to enhance the well-being of EFL teachers.

Methodology

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) is used as a guideline for the systematic review because it can ensure the comprehensive understanding and transparency to review and analyse research findings. The primary database used for this review is Google Scholar. This database covers from academic papers to journal articles. Search terms such as "PERMA", "EFL teachers", and "well-being" are included to identify relevant literature. Only studies published in English from 2019 to 2024 are selected for the review. The research cover the PERMA model to study the well-being of EFL teachers.

The screening and selection process involved several stages: initially, a broad search was conducted using the specified terms in Google Scholar. This was followed by reviewing the titles and abstracts to identify potentially relevant studies. Subsequently, the full texts of studies that appeared relevant were retrieved and assessed. Finally, the inclusion criteria were applied to determine the final set of studies to be included in the review.

More specifically, the article selection process, following the PRISMA flowchart, involved four phases: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. Initially, a basic search using the keywords yielded 48 articles, from which 23 unique papers were identified after removing

duplicates. In the eligibility phase, nine papers were excluded; two were reviews, one was off-topic, and one was inaccessible. Ultimately, ten research articles focusing on the relationship between positive psychology and language learning were included.

A qualitative analysis of the themes and findings identifies the similarities and differences in the application of the PERMA of the included studies and the insights they provided into the well-being of EFL teachers. In addition, some criteria of the included studies should be considered such as research questions, methodology, data analysis and findings to ensure the quality of the review’s conclusions.

Results

Conducted studies on the EFL teachers’ well-being

This review examined ten studies of the PERMA model to understand the well-being of EFL teachers. A variety of methodologies were applied, consisting qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Surveys and questionnaires were used to collect data on well-being, stress and other variables. Interviews and focus groups provided deeper understanding of teachers’ experiences with well-being.

The research looked at different aspects of the PERMA framework to find out how they affect teachers’ well-being. Four studies examine positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment in the PERMA model. Another four studies explore how stress, resilience, hope, and personality interact with PERMA. Two studies apply positive psychology without a focus on PERMA. One research studies the micro-scale changes in pre-service language teacher well-being.

The summary of ten studies included in the systematic review as follows:

Authors	Methodology	Participants	Context	Focus
Alqarni (2021)	Quantitative	University teachers	Saudi Arabia	The relationship between perception of stress, types of stressors, and well-being among foreign language teachers at university levels
Ergün et al. (2021)	Quantitative	Italian teachers from different levels	Italy, Turkey, Germany, Argentina, Albania, Algeria, Austria, Brazil, Czechia, China, Croatia, Estonia, France, Greece, Ireland, Mexico,	The relationship between two psychological factors, Well-being and Resilience and one novel emotional factor, namely Foreign Language Teaching Enjoyment (FLTE).

			Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Ukraine, UK and USA.	
Chen & Tang (2024)	Quantitative	University and college teachers	China	The effects of well-being and emotion regulation in EFL teachers' engagement.
Shanmugam, & Hidayat, (2022)	Quantitative	Primary school teachers	Malaysia	The influence of PERMA on the well-being and grit of Malaysian teachers of English as a second language (ESL)
MacIntyre, et al. (2022)	Quantitative	Post-secondary institutions, secondary institutions and a combination of institutional levels.	Japan, Canada, United States, Turkey, and Austria	The potentially significant role played by hope in facilitating well-being under difficult conditions, and the potential contribution of hope theory to understanding the reactions of language teachers.
Nadlifah et al. (2023)	Qualitative	Primary and secondary teachers	Indonesia	Indonesian EFL teachers' professional well-being using positive psychology
Oladrostam, et al.(2024)	Mixed-methods	School teachers	Iran	The effects of Positive psychology on the development of positivity among teachers and possible improvement in their instructional practice.
MacIntyre, et al. (2019)	Quantitative	International teachers	USA, Austria, Serbia, and	Correlations among personality, wellbeing and stress among an

		from different levels	different countries	international sample of language teachers
Sak & Gurbuz (2024).	Qualitative	Pre-service teachers	Turkey	The micro-scale changes in pre-service language teacher well-being.
Shao (2023)	Quantitative	Senior high school teachers	China	The relationship among teacher enthusiasm and teacher self-efficacy, grit, and teacher psychological well-being among Chinese English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher.

EFL teachers’ well-being through the lens of the PERMA model

The five factors included in the PERMA model are Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement. In this review, this framework is used as a guideline to find out how the role of each element plays in enhancing the mental health as well as the well-being of EFL teachers, especially in the recent years when EFL teachers struggle to achieve success in their teaching.

Positive Emotions

The findings of the studies find out Positive emotions play a significant role in contributing to maintain a good condition of psychological health and physical health for EFL teachers. Ergün et al. (2021) point out that EFL teachers’ well-being is affected by Foreign Language Teaching Enjoyment, which is a kind of positive emotions. Similarly, Nadlifah et al. (2023) state that positive emotions are considered as an effective measure to develop teachers’ professional well-being, promote the teaching activities and their engagement.

Engagement

Another factor of the PERMA model which affects EFL teachers’ well-being is engagement. Chen and Tang (2024) support that resilience and well-being promote teachers’ engagement contributing to professional success. Shanmugam and Hidayat (2022) demonstrate the importance of engagement in enhancing teachers’ dedication and perseverance. Shao (2023) states enthusiastic teachers find the purpose and meaning in their work, which improves their overall well-being.

Relationships

Sak and Gurbuz (2024) point out that social interactions within the classrooms are considered as a key element of well-being, which leads to strong student-teacher rapport. Nadlifah et al. (2023) find out that relationships, positive emotions and engagement are more important than accomplishments or meaning in professional well-being. These findings highlight the importance of social relations in educational contexts.

Meaning

Alqarni (2021) points out that meaning and accomplishment outweigh the other factors of PERMA framework. MacIntyre et al. (2022) report hope, which is related to the sense of meaning in life, contributes to psychological and physical health. Shao (2023) highlights that motivated teachers, who have a sense of purpose in their work, are likely to overcome difficulties. Nadlifah et al. (2023) state that it takes time to gain accomplishments and meaning in life, however, they are important to achieve professional satisfaction.

Achievement

Alqarni (2021) emphasises the role of accomplishment or achievement in leading to teachers' overall well-being. Shanmugam and Hidayat (2022) point out achievement affects changes in grit and well-being. MacIntyre et al. (2019) state that conscientiousness is closely linked to accomplishment and well-being. The sense of achievement brings high levels of satisfaction to teachers.

The PERMA model offers the valuable insights to EFL teachers' well-being. Each element plays its own role and correlates with each other in enhancing the well-being of EFL teachers. This can result in promoting the teaching effectiveness and student outcomes.

Discussion

The findings of the studies reviewed point out that the PERMA model has offered deeper insights into understanding the relationship between each aspect of the framework and the well-being of the EFL teachers. Mixed methods are applied in these studies with the focus on quantitative researches to collect data on various aspects of well-being and related variables. The scope of the research covers a wide range of educational environment and diverse cultures. It highlights the global scale of the adaptability and applicability of this model in different teaching contexts.

The review confirms that positive emotions enhance the well-being of EFL teachers in terms of mental health and physical health. Engagement supports active participation leading to professional job satisfaction. Relationships between the teachers and students can create a positive classroom environment, which makes the teaching more effective. The sense of meaning states that teachers can gain more satisfaction if they find a purpose in their teaching careers. The sense of achieving goals is closely connected to well-being and it is a key for enhancing motivation. To some extent, positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement contribute to the well-being of EFL teachers such as job satisfaction, motivation and mental health.

Conclusion

The review highlights how each factor brings positive effects to the teachers' well-being and their teaching activities. It contributes to the field by analysing recent studies of the PERMA model, providing a comprehensive understanding of how the PERMA framework has informed about the well-being of EFL teachers. The result will offer practical applications to enhance the well-being of EFL teachers. Five aspects of this model should be highlighted in

planning professional development programs for teachers and revising school policies to support teachers in gaining psychological health and physical health. Teachers themselves can also take advantage of these factors in designing teaching activities and applying in their professional development to bring the benefits to the students. However, the review still has some limitations. Only Google Scholar is used to include the recent studies which are published in English. Therefore, further research should include a wide range of databases and study how this model has been applied in different educational contexts and diverse cultures to achieve the generalizability in this field.

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Biodata

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