



## EMOTIONAL WELLBEING INDEX OF SELECTED SCHOOL EMPLOYEES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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**ABSTRACT** – During these times of isolation, keeping sane and healthy are very important to fulfill all our duties and responsibilities. As the education system at this time of the pandemic implements extensive changes in order to cope with the worst scenario, one could imagine to happen in our lifetime, the emotional wellbeing of everyone involved in the academe might be easily affected. Furthermore, any development in the academic community has a direct effect on its community members as well. In recent past studies, health and wellbeing were correlated with the assumption that if one is sick, wellbeing goes down. The current paper assessed the wellbeing status of the education sector of the community as the most affected group during this time of pandemic. It was the aim of the paper to identify the factors contributing to individual wellbeing and determine the emotional wellbeing status. A twelve-statement survey was given to participants after their attendance to the Community Wellbeing Program Webinars in preparation for the opening of classes in the 1st semester of Academic Year 2020-2021. Three categories: satisfaction, sense of control and trust were the dimensions affecting the level of emotional wellbeing. The Chi-square test of independence was also used to test if there was an association between emotional wellbeing and sociodemographic variables. It was found that at  $\alpha = 0.05$ , job and sex were moderately related with emotional wellbeing, demonstrating the subjectivity of comfort felt by teachers. In a neighborhood, poor wellbeing can significantly impact the lives and behaviors of families, which in turn contributes to a downward spiral of morals, values and the physical environmental damage. Hence, the EWB of teachers, administrators and staff has an impact not just on themselves and the students but also on the whole school community.

*Keywords: remote learning, satisfaction, sectoral representative, sense of control, social wellbeing*

### INTRODUCTION

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has brought about monumental changes in the daily lives and routines of people. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to plague the country and the rest of the world, strict community quarantines and physical distancing measures continue to be implemented, which have deeply affected various industries and sectors. Considerable fear and panic can be expected from the general public due to psychological implications caused by the present situation (Tsamakis et al., 2020). One of the many sectors affected, is the education sector, wherein teachers, administrators and staff alike have been forced to make the sudden shift from the regular mode of face-to-face classroom instruction, to

that of online teaching and learning. Because of the extensive changes that had to be made in the education system in such a short period of time, everyone experienced several shortcomings and difficulties in doing so. Although we all have survived these past years, some facets may have been compromised.

Given that some of the challenges faced were the burden to prepare, the urgency to redesign the course materials and the need to plan their effective delivery, these teachers and administrators or supervisors shared that their coping mechanisms were either “to relax, to learn, and to create/recreate.” Presented with this information, it was assumed that these changes in the education system and subsequent tasks had a direct effect on the emotional wellbeing of the involved parties, which in turn, would also affect their overall health, work quality and performance. As mentioned in several recent studies, health and wellbeing, specifically, emotional or psychological wellbeing, are indeed related with one another (Betonio, 2015; Go et al., 2020). It has been found that a strong link exists between mental and physical health (Ohrnberger et al., 2017), where past forms of both mental and physical health were discovered to have indirect or direct effects on one’s present mental and physical health, respectively (Muniruzzaman and Siddiky, 2021). Furthermore, the relationship between physical health and psychological wellbeing was also established in another study conducted among oldest-old adults, where it was identified that one’s status and perceptions of health would be of great importance in determining their state of wellbeing in extreme old age (Cho et al., 2011). In relation to the correlation of health and wellbeing with academic performance, a study was done among university students, wherein the researchers found that health, health behavior and educational achievement were indeed related to one another (Ansari and Stock, 2010). While these past studies have focused on other aspects of health in relation to wellbeing and academic performance, and have centered on the health of oldest-old adults and university students, the present study assessed the emotional wellbeing status of the education sector of the local community as the most affected group during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic in preparation for their numerous academic responsibilities.

The current study utilized the theory of wellbeing as enhanced by different dimensions of the workers such as their job satisfaction, self-concept and quitting intentions as elaborated by McInerney et al (2018). Just like the health frontliners, the teachers, administrators and staff in the school or university have faced the same dilemma considering our situation. The specific objectives of this study are as follows: 1) determine the indicators of emotional wellbeing, and 2) assess the level of emotional wellbeing of teachers, administrators and staff in spite of the worst situation we are facing at the moment.

## METHODOLOGY

For this study, an online survey was conducted among the participants of three community wellbeing program webinars that were hosted by the researchers. A total of 230 respondents participated in this study and consisted of university or college teachers, elementary or high school teachers and administrators or staff.

**Table 1.** The composition of the research participants.

University/College Teachers	Elem/High School Teachers	Administrator/Staff	TOTAL
118	37	75	230

**Table 2.** The specific dimensions, their corresponding indicators and effect on emotional wellbeing, included within the study's survey on a participant's emotional wellbeing status.

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Effect on Emotional Wellbeing (+) or (-)</b>
<b>Sense of Satisfaction</b>	I am optimistic about the future	+
	I am useful.	+
	I am feeling relaxed.	+
	I have been dealing with problems well.	+
	I feel close to other people.	+
	I am able to make up my mind about things.	+
<b>Sense of Control</b>	How satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	+
	How happy did you feel yesterday?	+
	How anxious did you feel yesterday?	-
	Do you feel the things in your life as worthwhile?	+
<b>Trust</b>	Most people can be trusted.	+

Per given indicator, each participant stated their decision in terms of how accurately they felt the statements described themselves; specifically, whether they “strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree” with the listed questions and statements. Although most, if not all of the indicators under the dimensions of Sense of Satisfaction, Sense of Control and Trust had a positive effect on one's emotional wellbeing, one question under Sense of Control, namely “How anxious did you feel yesterday?” left that of a negative effect. In order to analyze their corresponding responses in consideration of their positive or negative effects, several methods of statistical analysis were used in this study. Using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = *very inaccurate*, 5 = *very accurate*), participants rated a list of 20 items in terms of how accurately they felt the statements described themselves. Each of the five factors consisted of four items, with a scale score consisting of the average of the respective ratings (*a* ranges from .65 to .82) (Donnellan et al., 2006).

The first statistical process that was done was the Normalization of Values, wherein the Min-Max rescaling method was used to normalize the variables. Each variable was decomposed into an identical range between zero and one. To determine the kind of influence each indicator had on a participant's emotional wellbeing, Table 2 was used as the basis. For indicators with a positive effect on Emotional Wellbeing (EWB), Equation 1 was used as follows:

$$\text{EQUATION 1: } y = \frac{X_i - \text{Min}(X_i)}{\text{Max}(X_i) - \text{Min}(X_i)}$$

Where:

y = normalized value

X<sub>i</sub> = value of the observation

Min(X<sub>i</sub>) = minimum value across all observations at i<sup>th</sup> indicator

Max(X<sub>i</sub>) = maximum value across all observations at i<sup>th</sup> indicator

On the other hand, Equation 2 was used for the sole indicator with the negative effect on EWB:

$$\text{EQUATION 2: } y = \frac{\text{Max}(X_i) - X_i}{\text{Max}(X_i) - \text{Min}(X_i)}$$

Furthermore, the above-mentioned methods were done for all and by job category.

The second statistical procedure was Determining of Weights. The researchers assumed the equal weights of all three dimensions and their respective indicators. The treatment of all dimensions and indicators was necessary as they were all of equal importance to the study.

The third statistical process was Additive Aggregation Methods. In this phase of the statistical analysis for the study, the value for each dimension was aggregated to produce the EWB Index. To come up with the EWB Index, the following formula was proposed and used:

$$Di = \sum_j^{n_j} w_{I_i} I_{ij}$$

Where:

I<sub>ij</sub> = j<sup>th</sup> indicator value under i<sup>th</sup> dimension

w<sub>I<sub>i</sub></sub> = indicator weight under i<sup>th</sup> dimension

n<sub>j</sub> = number of indicators

After which, the EWB Index of each job category under study was computed as follows:

$$EWB_i = (S * W_{d1}) + (SC * W_{d2}) + (T * W_{d3})$$

Where:

S = Satisfaction

SC = Sense of Control

T = Trust

W<sub>d1</sub> to W<sub>d3</sub> are weights of the three (3) dimensions

Subsequently, several statistical tools were used to determine if there was a direct association between one's EWB and sociodemographic variables (i.e., job, sex (gender) and age). The first tool that was employed was the Chi-Square Test of Independence, which tested the relationship of categorical variables. For this test, the assumptions were as follows:

Ho: There is no relationship between the two variables

Ha: There is a relationship between the two variables

Moreover, the study was interpreted at 95% significance, and the decision used by the researchers to reject the null hypothesis was if the P-value < 0.05. For variables which were significant, Cramer's V, the last statistical tool for this study, was used to interpret the level of the relationship between two categorical variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Factors contributing to emotional wellbeing*

All participants of the aforementioned community wellbeing program webinars answered the twelve statement survey after their attendance of the event. These participants and their responses were then categorized into three major groups based on their current jobs: University or College Teachers, Elementary or High School Teachers and Administrators or Supervisors, from either public or private school systems.

The research participants answered the different questions and statements that were included in the survey on emotional wellbeing, which served as the indicators of the three dimensions considered as important for the identification of each participant's current emotional wellbeing status; namely: sense of satisfaction, sense of control and trust.

**Sense of satisfaction.** Six concepts were taken into account to determine whether the participants were somehow satisfied with their current scenario (Fig. 1 a-f). The year 2020 was quite overwhelming because of the pandemic. Nobody knows what comes next in life, thus, they say that tomorrow is a mystery. The pandemic brought a drastic change to the different sectors of our life including the usual interactions with friends, teachers and classmates which were all put to a halt.

Although no one can be sure of what will happen, it was surprising that almost all of the respondents were still optimistic (Fig. 1 a). Samat et al. (2021) considered the absence of face-to-face meetings as very challenging. Being resourceful, despite the numerous problems, was surely a big thing and was clearly reflected by the majority of respondents who considered themselves valuable even with the current situation (Fig. 1 b). On the other hand, feeling relaxed perhaps may be different with the kind of respondents. The administrators and staff groups were not too sure whether they were alright as shown by their level of response (32% ) (Fig. 1 c). The administrators, being at the helm of responsibility, should have higher pressure than the rest of the groups, hence, resulting in the uncertainties.

The same scenario can easily be seen when asked about dealing with their own problems and the feeling of being close to other people, as the administrators and staff showed similar patterns (Fig. 1 d, e). Luckily enough, majority agreed that they were able to make up their minds, which was very important to note, because the decision making capability within them was still at its best (Fig. 1 f).

**Sense of Control.** It is a reality that teachers are expected to have control over classroom concerns and all other problems surrounding them. They are always expected to work things out so that the 'desirable disposition' is still the norm during interactions with learners, colleagues and supervisor (Go et al., 2020; Zabidi et al., 2020). Go et al. (2020) strongly hinted that effective teachers know how to regulate their thoughts and emotions, which they considered as the ability of teachers to compartmentalize problems. On the other hand, Jensen (2021) highlighted the concern about classroom emotional climate which causes some authorities in the classroom to lose control.

Majority of the respondents were showing a great sense of control, being satisfied with their own lives despite the pandemic (Fig. 2 a, b, d). However, it is noticeable that they were also worried at the same time (Fig. 2 c). In March 2020, the pandemic was just starting to be felt in the country. It was also evident that the university professors (66%) were more strongly worried than the elementary and high school teachers (51.3%) (Fig. 2 c). Tsamakias et al. (2020) believed that people were under a high level of stress. Indeed, the entire community suffered great pain and fear. Certainly, the change of the learning environment was more difficult perhaps with the older students, since they were already used to having their own independence (Cho et al., 2011; Muniruzzuman and Siddiky, 2021).

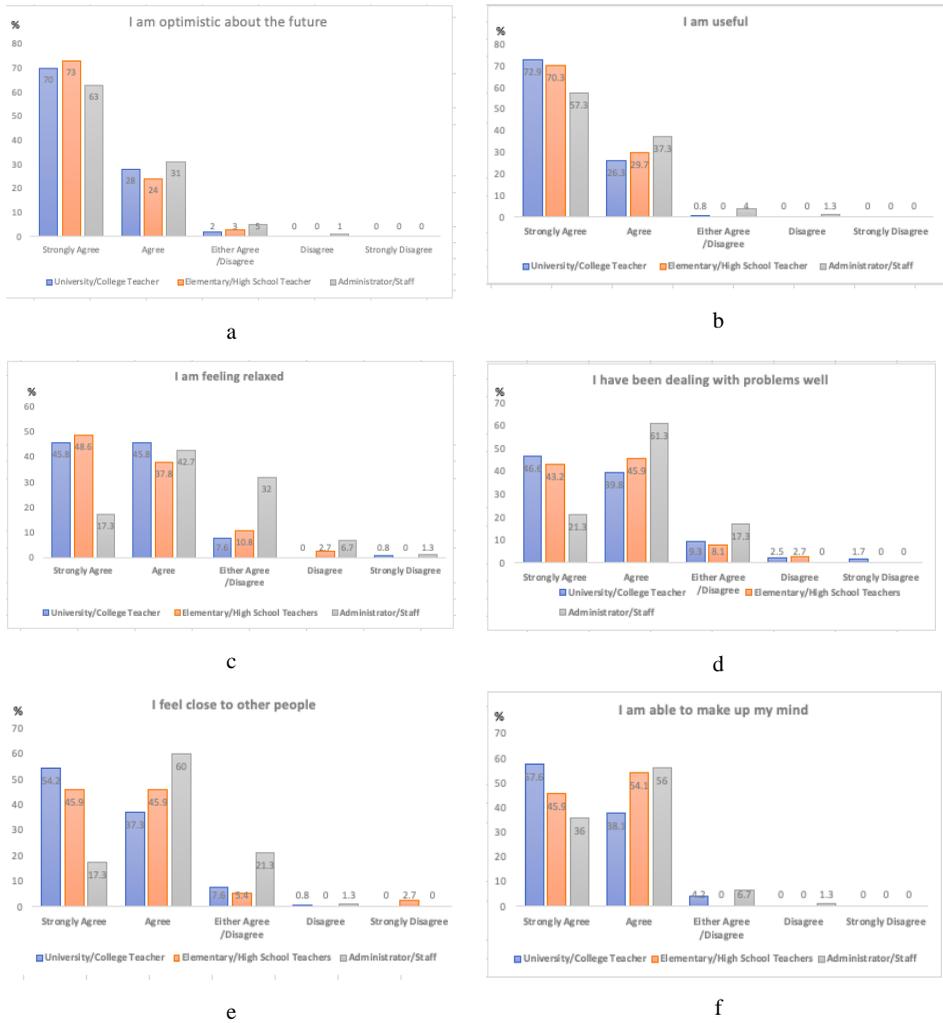


Figure 1. a-f. Concepts of satisfaction represented by the six statements.

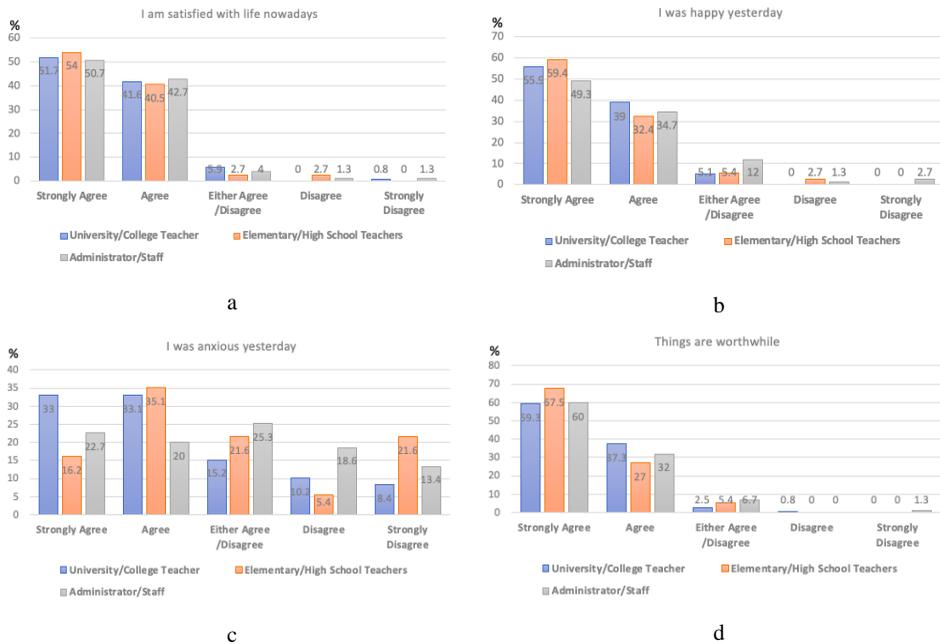


Figure 2. a-d. Concepts of sense of control as shown by the four statements.

Sense of Trust. Any secure person can also have a better leverage of trust on other people. Mikulincer (1998) strongly believe so. Trust on someone is an alternative to power. This means that they might depend on others to produce the expected output, without inflicting coercion. The sense of trust could be referred to as the actor’s expectation of the other actor. In the case of the respondents in this study, although very minimal, there were still those who showed distrust (Fig. 3). Fortunately, a big portion still believed that people can be trusted even with the current problem the world is facing.

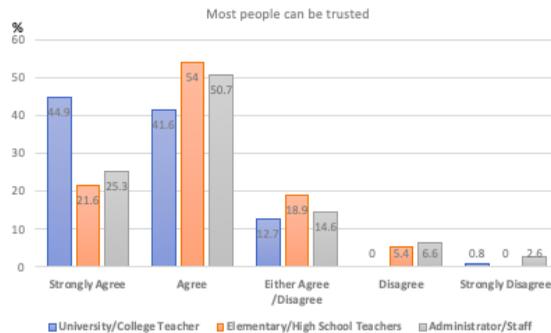


Figure 3. The different level of trust each group has on other people.

**Status of wellbeing**

It is general knowledge that wellbeing can be subjective because guidelines always vary with group, time and even space. We can measure these relatively subjective concepts by asking respondents how they feel about different aspects of their lives and how content they are with the present scenario (Anand, 2016; Buot et al., 2017).

The present social, political and physical environment may affect each respondent differently. Certainly, the time needed to prepare for the shift in the teaching and learning mode affected their wellbeing in general as everyone was trying to find ways to survive this health threat. The question whether one can truly deliver their mission to teach was constantly hanging in thin air. Some questioned their capacity to prepare all the necessary teaching materials adding to the tension (Zabidi et al., 2020). The three dimensions: sense of satisfaction, sense of control and sense of trust, are the three main concepts needed to evaluate the wellbeing of the respondents, specifically the emotional wellbeing (EWB) (Fig. 4).

The emotional wellbeing index of the job category under study was computed as follows:

$$EWB_i = (S * W_{d1}) + (SC * W_{d2}) + (T * W_{d3})$$

Where: S = Satisfaction, SC = Sense of Control; T = Trust  
 $W_{d1}$  to  $W_{d3}$  are weights of the three dimensions

**Table 3.** The different EWB scores of the three groups of respondents.

<b>Job Classification</b>	<b>EWB Score</b>
College teachers	0.75
Elementary/High School Teachers	0.68
Administrator/Supervisor	0.71

EWB scores can then be analyzed further by looking at the qualitative category per score as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Interpretation of the EWB scores based on its qualitative category.

<b>EWB i scores</b>	<b>Qualitative Category</b>
0.81-1.0	Very strong
0.61-0.80	Strong
0.41-0.60	Moderate
0.21-0.41	Weak
0.00-0.20	Very weak

By using the EWB index formula, each respondent was categorized accordingly. It was clearly shown that University or College Teachers was the group with the highest EWB Index at 0.75, which meant a strong EWB value (Table 2). The groups of Elementary/High School Teachers and Administrators/Supervisors were also found to each have a strong EWB value, with EWB Indices of 0.68 and 0.71, respectively. Although this study did not initially intend to compare the EWB values of these groups, it was mentioned that University or College Teachers had the highest EWB value. Perhaps this can be attributed to their quick shift in the use of technology to enhance online teaching and learning. Administrators or Supervisors had the second highest EWB value among the three groups, which could be due to the clear support given to them. Although the score of the Elementary or High School Teachers illustrated a strong EWB index, the group had the lowest score among the three groups. This could be brought about by the many difficulties of teaching basic skills such as reading and writing via online platforms at this young stage of children's development.

After the current EWB status of each group was determined, a Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted between Emotional Wellbeing vs. Job, Age bracket and Sex (Gender) to investigate if any associations existed between a participant's EWB and their respective sociodemographic variables. Thereafter, two other statistical tools, namely the P-Value and Cramer's V (Interpretation) were also used (Table 5).

**Table 5.** The results of the Test of Independence between Emotional Wellbeing vs. Job, Age bracket and Sex (Gender).

	Job	Sex (Gender)	Age bracket
<i>Chi-square</i>	50.602	494,345	10.2395
<i>P-value</i>	0.000***	0.000***	0.595
<i>Cramer's V</i>	0.3317	0.3278	

As per Cramer's value, job and sex both have a moderately positive relationship with emotional wellbeing at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . On the other hand, age, another sociodemographic variable, was found to have no effect on one's EWB.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This particular study determined three indicators of emotional wellbeing among teachers (elementary/high school and university) and administrators/supervisors. These are the sense of satisfaction, sense of control and sense of trust. The study assessed the current emotional wellbeing levels of teachers as well as that of the administrators or supervisors during the transition period from face-to-face classroom instruction to flexible online teaching and learning, brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the use of certain statistical methods and tools, all three groups were each found to have a strong level of emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, participants' sociodemographic variables of job and sex (gender) were determined to have a direct association with their level of emotional wellbeing, which means that job and sex, greatly affect a person's emotional wellbeing status.

It is important to remember that "health state, whether physical or emotional or mental, strongly affects the work quality of anyone." Given this, it is necessary that all educational institutions provide their students, teachers and staff with the support they need to prepare for and adapt to the new classroom

modality. Perhaps, inclusive policies alongside the provision of important resources and beneficial support systems and services may be necessary. The University of the Philippines for example, provided internet subsidy for teachers and student loan for students and employees. Moreover, reading breaks are scheduled in every semester to ensure a healthy mind and body of the faculty and students.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The study was funded by the UPLB Basic Research.

## **STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP**

The first author conceptualized the theoretical framework, identified key informants and undertook the writing. The second author suggested important points in the choice of the cases and the key informants.

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