A Literature Review on Organisational Belonginess, Work Self-Efficacy, and Work Tenacity: Predictors of Affective Well-Being Among Educators in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT: In the context of the growing and complex education landscape, teaching was increasingly seen and understood as one of the most challenging and stressful professions. This made the well-being of educators within the higher education sector a major concern, as they were affected by a range of issues, including increased workload, role conflicts, and the emotional strain of their teaching responsibilities. It was important to understand the relationship between organisational belongingness, work self-efficacy, work tenacity, and the negative emotional well-being of educators in order to foster a more positive teaching and learning environment within the higher education sector. The research was therefore driven by the social identity theory and examined the interaction of the variables "work self-efficacy," "work tenacity," "organisational belongingness," "motivation," and "workload intensity." The study used a sequential explanatory design, whereby the qualitative sample consisted of six administrative staff members and the quantitative sample included 400 educator participants from higher education institutions within Beijing and across China. The quantitative data were processed using SmartPLS, while the qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis after the participants' responses were transcribed verbatim. Based on the results from structural equation modeling, all the variables were supported, and the model predicted that the emotional well-being and motivation of educators could be enhanced through increased belief in their abilities and determination to complete assigned tasks within a stipulated timeframe. Elder support, institutional support, and community commitment were found not to fully ascertain community well-being, as revealed in the thematic analysis. The findings highlighted that support and communication within institutional systems, professional opportunities, and the equitable participation of faculty members at various levels of the educational community in decision-making increased the emotional stability, motivation, and job satisfaction of educational community members.

KEYWORDS: Institutional support; emotional well-being; higher education; leadership; job satisfaction; mental health.

1. Introduction

Research on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of higher education staff has in recent years [1] received increased attention. Staff emotional and psychological wellbeing has been overshadowed by concerns about the increasing pressure resulting from varied administrative responsibilities. Factors affecting the emotional wellbeing of staff included self-efficacy, sense of organisational belonging, and work perseverance [2]. There has been a recent worldwide trend, particularly in the education sector, for institutions of higher learning to be funded based on the performance of the education they offer. There has also been a trend to rank institutions based on their managerial skills and degree of competitiveness [3]. Such factors undermined collegiality and altered the overall climate of educational institutions. Although these factors have also been studied in K-12 settings, integrative research on their combined effect on the emotional wellbeing of university educators has remained scant [4].

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that influenced the emotional wellbeing of educators in higher education, specifically work self-efficacy, work perseverance, organisational belongingness, motivation, and workload intensity. This research determined the influence of work self-efficacy on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of educators and the influence of work perseverance on their emotional health and overall job satisfaction. Additionally, the study explored the impact of organisational belongingness on educators' affective wellbeing. The analysis also investigated motivation and its potential mediating effect on the associations between the primary predictors and educators' emotional wellbeing. Finally, the impact of workload was analyzed in terms of how the excess work educators were required to perform affected the relationships between work self-efficacy, work perseverance, organisational affective commitment, and emotional wellbeing. This review focused on the Asian and Chinese contexts, shedding light on cultural diversity in relation to the selected predictors and outcome variables.

2. Literature Review

This section reviewed theory and research studies relevant to the research questions. The review began with Social Identity Theory, from which the hypotheses were developed. Main ideas were introduced first, followed by elaboration based on supporting studies.

2.1. Theory.

Social Identity Theory, a psychological paradigm, describes how individuals developed their sense of dignity and self-assurance through the organisations to which they belonged. It illustrated how being a member of a group could result in partiality, prejudice, and unjust treatment of those outside the group [5]. According to the concept, people elevated the prestige of their own community while denigrating others in an effort to maintain or enhance their social position. Because people and groups constantly evaluated their relative situations, this dynamic led to biases, stereotypes, and intergroup rivalry [6]. Social Identity Theory shaped the comprehension of human behaviour (Figure 1), illuminating topics including brand loyalty, politicised identities, online discussion boards, and scholastic rivalries. Self-categorization, the mental process by which people categorized themselves as belonging to specific social groups,

often caused them to prioritize common features and group standards over individual qualities, which in turn influenced their feelings, thoughts, and actions in social situations [7, 8].
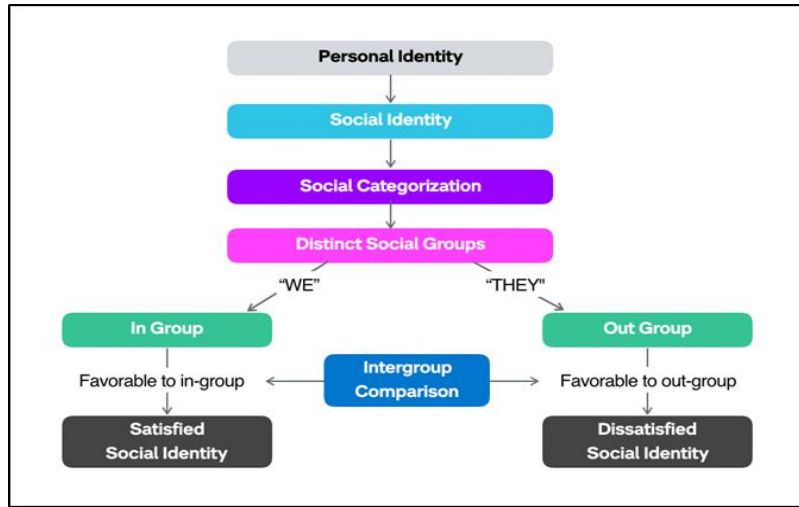

Figure 1. Social identity theory.

The process by which people internalized group membership as a component of their self-perception was known as social identification. In contrast to social identity, which defined the outcome of this relationship, social identification explained how individuals began to perceive the values and objectives of the group as personally significant [5]. The act of assessing one's group standing or worth in comparison to others was referred to as social comparison. This process helped preserve or strengthen group identity and frequently fueled rivalry, a sense of superiority, or the perpetuation of preconceptions based on group membership [9]. Social identity theory focused on how individuals thought and behaved as part of a particular group, while it largely ignored larger social factors such as social institutions, inequality, and institutional discrimination [10]. Each group identity was subject to particular influences that determined who gained group advantage, who was included, and the nature of inter-group relations. Concerns regarding the application of social identity theory arose as it continued to be employed across many domains. Although using group identification could strengthen bonds, it could also widen gaps [11] (Figure 2).
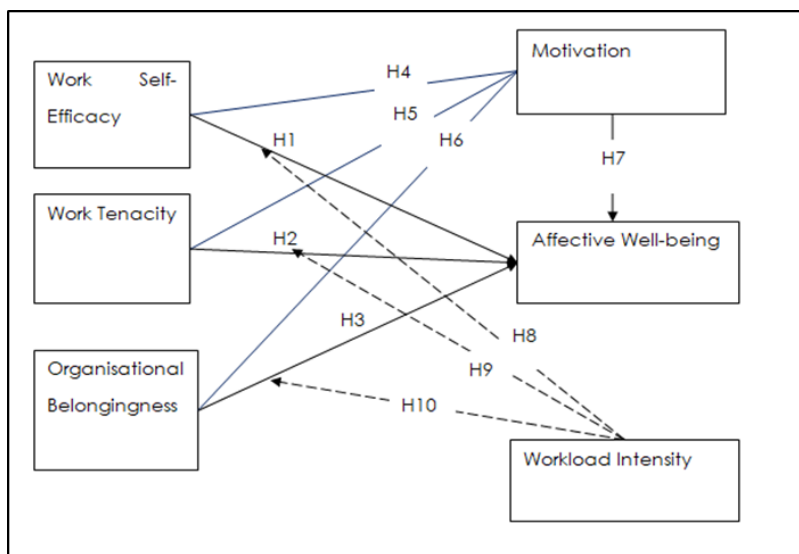

Figure 2. Conceptual framework.

2.2. Hypothesis Development.

Based on the theoretical framework and literature review, the study developed ten hypotheses to examine the relationships among work self-efficacy, work tenacity, organisational belongingness, motivation, workload intensity, and affective wellbeing. The first three hypotheses proposed that work self-efficacy, work tenacity, and organisational belongingness each had a significant impact on affective wellbeing. The next three hypotheses suggested that work self-efficacy, work tenacity, and organisational belongingness influenced motivation. Another hypothesis proposed that motivation significantly impacted affective wellbeing. Finally, three hypotheses examined the moderating role of workload intensity on the relationships between work self-efficacy, work tenacity, organisational belongingness, and affective wellbeing.

2.2.1. Work self-efficacy is important for educators to improve their affective well-being.

Effective school management practices in the field of education were closely linked to the improvement of teaching-related interests and motivation among educators. According to [12], the development of adequate self-efficacy in the workplace was crucial for job satisfaction and the professional development of teachers, which was particularly significant in this era of rapid educational changes. Furthermore, [2] investigated how work self-efficacy was essential for teachers to cope with newly emerging challenges in the field of education. Thus, it had a significant relationship with the improvement of teachers' well-being. It was also suggested that improvement in the connection between teachers and management could be developed through the enhancement of self-efficacy among educators.

2.2.2. Relationship between Work Tenacity and affective well-being among educators.

Work tenacity was identified as a crucial factor associated with the improvement of well-being and engagement among teachers [13]. It was closely related to goal determination and commitment to work, which was often linked to the level of tenacity, and contributed to the development of resilience. Furthermore, [14] found that the level of tenacity could be improved among teachers who had a well-developed professional identity. Previous studies also highlighted the significance of emotional control in this context.

2.2.3. Organisational Belongingness and its role in influencing affective well-being.

Organisational belonging reflected the feeling of being valued, accepted, and a good fit within the workplace, functioning as a key psychological resource for educators' affective well-being. [15] demonstrated that belongingness reduced uncertainty and social threat, resulting in lower emotional exhaustion and chronic stress. It also supported basic psychological needs, highlighted adverse effects, and enhanced positive outcomes. In higher education, results were inconsistent, with some studies showing a positive relationship between high job satisfaction and a sense of belonging. [16] suggested that organisational belongingness helped reduce turnover intention and promoted emotional resilience. These mechanisms provided social support, fostered professional identity, and improved access to instrumental resources, thereby enhancing enthusiasm and decreasing frustration. According to [17], disciplinary culture, organisational justice, and leadership style were weaker when ambiguity and workload were

high. Previous studies indicated that measurement issues could undermine inferences when single-item measures were used instead of validated multidimensional instruments. Organisational belongingness was distinct from inclusion, acceptance, and identification, and future studies could employ longitudinal designs to examine factors addressing cross-cultural variations in academic collegiality norms.

2.2.4. Role of motivation in impacting the affective well-being of educators.

Motivation was identified as a significant factor affecting educators' affective well-being by maintaining both extrinsic and intrinsic quality. [18] explained that when teachers pursued work for intrinsic interest or autonomy, their basic requirements for competence, relatedness, and autonomy were satisfied, producing a positive impact and reducing depressive symptoms. Conversely, [19] suggested that performance pay could be externally regulated, which might increase anxiety and emotional exhaustion despite high productivity. Motivation had both a direct relationship with positive affect and an indirect relationship through mediators, including self-efficacy, work-life balance, and cognitive appraisal of job demands. According to [20], motivational orientations were influenced by situational factors such as institution-based reward systems, leadership engagement, and work incentives. Intrinsic motivation was further encouraged by autonomy-supportive leadership, which positively impacted effectiveness [21]. Limitations in the literature included the excessive use of cross-sectional surveys with mixed motivational profiles, and cultural beliefs regarding education and occupation also influenced motivation in different settings. Motivation directly impacted commitment, job satisfaction, and resilience by reducing stress and burnout, allowing educators to perform at a high level, which in turn improved their well-being and job performance.

2.2.5. Role of Workload Intensity in influencing the affective well-being of educators.

Workload intensity played a vital role in regulating affective well-being and influenced the effects of organisational belongingness. According to [22], understanding one's full potential was critical for recognizing the importance of educators' well-being. Additionally, the effectiveness of teachers improved when the workload was manageable. The creation of teaching materials and other professional responsibilities were affected in this context. Furthermore, [23] identified that strategic interventions in the workplace were influenced by workload intensity, which also contributed to the development of affective well-being.

3. Methodology

This section presents the process followed to study the affective well-being of teachers in higher education in China, including the research approach, population, sampling methods, data collection methods, and data analysis methods, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative approaches as illustrated in Figure 2. The study focused on teachers in higher education institutions in Beijing, China. According to the Ministry of Education (MoE), as of 2023, China employed a total of 2,074,900 full-time teachers [24]. Previous research indicated that teachers in China, particularly in rapidly developing educational districts such as Beijing, experienced high levels of emotional distress and burnout [25]. To achieve a well-balanced representation, a total of 400 teachers were sampled based on the Krejcie and Morgan sampling table, which recommended a sample size of 384 for a population exceeding one million.

3.1. Qualitative sample and data collection.

The qualitative component involved selecting six administrative staff members from higher education institutions in Beijing to obtain their perspectives through semi-structured interviews. Participants were chosen through simple random sampling to ensure that everyone had an equal chance of being selected [26]. Data collection integrated multiple methods. For the quantitative aspect, a pre-designed, tightly structured questionnaire with closed-ended responses was used, employing a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire included yes/no items, Likert scale responses, and numerically structured questions to obtain quantifiable information. Teachers in Beijing were surveyed electronically using platforms such as Google Forms. For the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were conducted with administrative staff via Microsoft Teams. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes. Participants were informed that their interviews would be recorded for transcription and subsequent thematic analysis, and interviews were conducted only after obtaining consent via official institutional emails.

3.2. *Quantitative data analysis.*

Quantitative data were analyzed using SmartPLS to assess the relationships between multiple variables and determine model fit. Correlations were calculated based on descriptive statistics to quantify demographic differences. Further analyses included the HTMT test, Fornell-Larcker criterion, and path coefficient analysis [27−29].

3.3. Qualitative data analysis.

Thematic analysis was employed for qualitative data. The process involved isolating excerpts from interview transcripts, constructing blocks of codes, and identifying different themes [30]. Analysis primarily focused on keywords, enabling the construction of themes by grouping codes into major categories. The purpose was to identify relationships and associations within the data. Reflexivity was applied throughout the analysis to maintain rigor and consistency. As a result of this process, the study ensured transparency and robustness in investigating the affective well-being of educators in China.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents both quantitative and qualitative analyses. It begins with the respondents' demographic profile and concludes with reliability and validity assessments of the measurement model. The subsequent subsections provide results for the structural model, including path coefficients and hypothesis testing. Finally, qualitative findings from the semi-structured interviews are organized thematically to supplement and enrich the quantitative results.

4.1. Respondents' demographic profile.

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 400 respondents. The majority held a master's degree (55.5%) and a bachelor's degree (37.5%), while 3% had an M.Phil. and 4% held a doctoral degree. Regarding teaching experience, most respondents had less than five years of

experience (66.5%), followed by 5–10 years (20.8%). Only 4.3% had 16–20 years of experience, and 3.3% had more than 20 years. In terms of employment status, 30.5% were full-time faculty, 26% were part-time faculty, 16.5% were administrative staff with teaching responsibilities, another 16.5% were research faculty, and 10.5% were visiting or contractual lecturers.

Table 1. Demographic profiling test.

Category	Subcategory	Count	Column N %
Level of Education	Bachelor's Degree	150	37.5%
	Master's Degree	222	55.5%
	M.Phil	12	3.0%
	Doctoral Degree (Ph.D./Ed.D.)	16	4.0%
Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	266	66.5%
	5–10 years	83	20.8%
	11–15 years	21	5.3%
	16–20 years	17	4.3%
	More than 20 years	13	3.3%
Employment Status	Full-time faculty	122	30.5%
	Part-time/Adjunct faculty	104	26.0%
	Visiting/Contractual lecturer	42	10.5%
	Administrative with teaching role	66	16.5%
	Research faculty	66	16.5%

4.2. Reliability and validity assessment.

The reliability of all developed items was assessed to ensure measurement accuracy. Figure 3 shows the correlations between the variables. Cronbach's alpha values for all six variables ranged from 0.7 to 0.9, indicating strong internal consistency and that the five-point Likert scale effectively measured the constructs [31]. The internal alpha values for each construct were close to 0.90, confirming significant internal consistency.
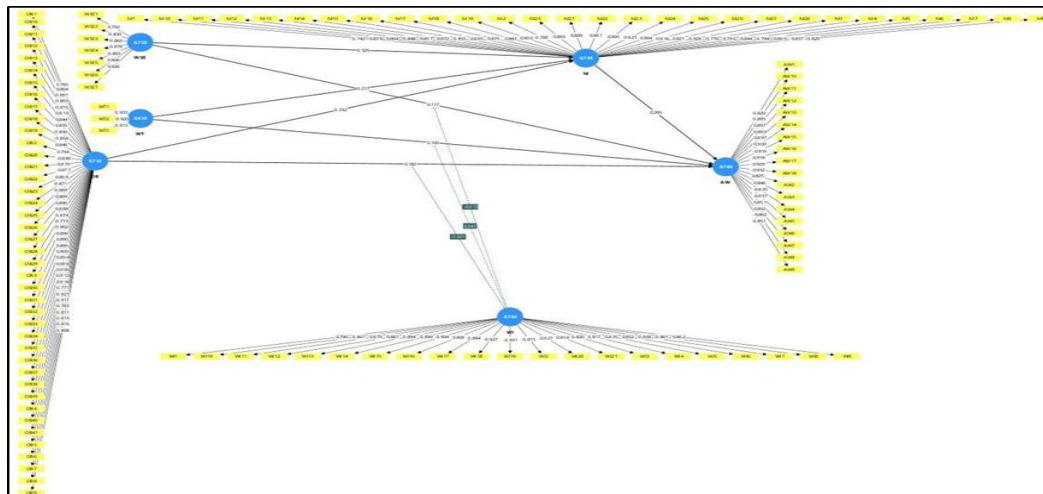

Figure 3. Final model.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the HTMT and Fornell-Larcker tests. Table 2 presents the HTMT results, showing that all values were below 0.90, confirming sufficient discriminant validity. Table 3 presents the Fornell-Larcker results, where the AVE values for

all constructs exceeded 0.50, indicating that the items were acceptable and the constructs were valid.

Table 2: HTMT Test.

	AW	M	OB	WI	WSE	WT	WI x WSE	WI x WT	WI x OB
AW									
M	0.581								
OB	0.469	0.511							
WI	0.449	0.444	0.310						
WSE	0.416	0.514	0.334	0.258					
WT	0.368	0.444	0.340	0.168	0.322				
WI x WSE	0.021	0.021	0.024	0.052	0.049	0.035			
WI x WT	0.045	0.034	0.025	0.030	0.032	0.032	0.314		
WI x OB	0.042	0.065	0.022	0.136	0.020	0.020	0.380	0.359	

Table 3. Fornell larcker test.

	AW	M	OB	WI	WSE	WT
AW	0.877					
M	0.574	0.860				
OB	0.465	0.508	0.856			
WI	-0.443	-0.439	-0.307	0.874		
WSE	0.402	0.498	0.324	-0.251	0.871	
WT	0.350	0.423	0.325	-0.161	0.301	0.922

4.3. Structural model and path coefficient analysis.

Table 4 presents the path coefficients for the model. Motivation (M), organizational belonging (OB), workload intensity (WI), work self-efficacy (WSE), and work tenacity (WT) all positively affected affective well-being (AW). OB showed a strong predictive relationship with mindfulness (b = 0.332), while WSE and WT also positively influenced mindfulness. Most relationships were significant ($p < 0.05$). Moderating effects of WI on OB, WSE, and WT were minor, indicating that workload intensity did not strongly moderate these relationships. Overall, the results suggest that affective well-being of educators depends significantly on mindfulness and organizational factors [32].

Table 4. Path Coefficient.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
M -> AW	0.285	0.285	0.051	5.536	0.000
OB -> AW	0.182	0.183	0.046	3.992	0.000
OB -> M	0.332	0.332	0.038	8.643	0.000
WI -> AW	0.219	0.220	0.046	4.758	0.000
WI x OB -> AW	0.021	0.022	0.046	0.453	0.015
WI x WSE -> AW	0.013	0.013	0.043	0.310	0.026
WI x WT -> AW	0.047	0.047	0.040	1.170	0.004
WSE -> AW	0.117	0.118	0.044	2.656	0.008
WSE -> M	0.325	0.327	0.038	8.579	0.000
WT -> AW	0.100	0.096	0.041	2.443	0.015
WT -> M	0.217	0.218	0.042	5.127	0.000

Table 4 shows out of these five variables, Motivation (M), organizational belonging (OB), Workload intensity (WI), work self-efficacy (WSE), and work tenacity (WT) have the most positive effects on AW. After the interaction terms models are fitted, it can be observed that the effects are less strong clearly. OB has a very strong predictive relationship of mindfulness (b = 0.332), both WSE and WT positively affect mindfulness. Most of these relationships are significant with a p value under 0.05 meaning that there are high correlations [32]. The moderating effects, namely WI x OB, WI x WSE, and WI x WT are, however, quite minor which indicates that the degree of moderation is not so significant. On the whole, the results of the research indicate that the affective well-being of educators is dependent on mindfulness and organizational aspects.

4.4. Hypothesis testing.

Table 5 summarizes the hypothesis testing results. All hypotheses (H1–H10) were supported, with p-values less than 0.05, indicating that organizational belonging, work self-efficacy, and work tenacity significantly impacted affective well-being.

Table 5. Hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis	Status
H1: Work Self-Efficacy has a significant impact on the affective well-being	Satisfied
H2: Work Tenacity has a significant impact on the affective well-being	Satisfied
H3: Organisational belongingness has a significant impact on the affective well-being	Satisfied
H4: Work Self-Efficacy has a significant impact on motivation	Satisfied
H5: Work Tenacity has a significant impact on motivation	Satisfied
H6: Organisational belongingness has a significant impact on motivation	Satisfied
H7: Motivation has a significant impact on affective well-being	Satisfied
H8: Workload intensity impacts the relationship between Work Self-Efficacy and affective well-being	Satisfied
H9: Workload intensity impacts the relationship between Work Tenacity and affective well-being	Satisfied
H10: Workload intensity impacts the relationship between Organisational belongingness and affective well-being	Satisfied

4.5. Qualitative and quantitative findings.

As per the results of Table 5, all hypotheses from H1 to H10 were supported in this study. The p-values for all variables were less than 0.05, indicating that all hypotheses were statistically significant. This also confirmed that organizational belongingness, work self-efficacy, and work tenacity had a significant impact on affective well-being.

4.5.1. Theme 1: Fostering educator success through effective leadership and institutional resources.

The success of educators relied heavily on empowering and supportive leadership and adequate institutional resources. Effective leaders made teachers feel valued and recognized within the organization. Interviewee 1 stated, "We commonly involve faculty in different key decision-making processes." Similarly, Interviewee 2 emphasized the importance of "open communication" and "inclusive meetings," explaining, "I regularly practice transparent and empathetic leadership at my workplace." Open and participative leadership enhanced morale, promoted collaboration, and built trust. Interviewee 2 added, "My supportive and participative leadership style boosts morale by promoting collaboration, trust, and open dialogue." Institutional resources were also significant in enhancing educator confidence and well-being. Both interviewees highlighted the importance of wellness programs, counseling services, and

professional development opportunities. Interviewee 1 noted that offering "research grants, sabbatical opportunities, and peer collaboration platforms" benefitted both professional and emotional development. Interviewee 2 reinforced this by mentioning "training workshops and mentoring programs."

4.5.2. Theme 2: Supporting educators' mental health and well-being through resources.

Educators' mental health and well-being were supported through strong institutional resources and a supportive environment. Interviewee 3 stated, "I emphasized the development of a supportive culture, providing necessary resources, and implementing systemic changes to enhance the emotional well-being of educators." Interviewee 4 echoed this, highlighting similar practices. Such measures reduced stress and burnout and ensured emotional balance. Wellness programs, counseling services, mentorship, and professional development were critical for supporting educators' mental health. Interviewee 3 emphasized, "Mentorship and robust professional development are the most significant aspects of institutional support for emotional and professional growth." Interviewee 4 reinforced this: "Mentorship programs, training workshops, and wellness programs help teachers thrive in their practice and profession."

4.5.3. Theme 3: Building a sense of community and belonging among educators.

Inclusion, recognition, and collaboration fostered a sense of community and belonging among educators. Interviewee 5 noted, "We also include teachers in the decision-making process." Interviewee 6 added, "New faculty members are welcomed through official orientation sessions and casual networking events with colleagues from other disciplines." Recognition further strengthened a sense of competence: "Their sense of competence is strengthened when their efforts are recognized with honors, promotions, or public acknowledgment," stated Interviewee 6. Mutual support and open communication created a strong community platform. Interviewee 5 mentioned, "During trying times, the entire establishment functions in unison to enhance motivation." Interviewee 6 added that teachers could ask questions without fear of criticism, providing psychological safety. Collaboration opportunities, such as research funding and peer mentoring, also promoted unity and confidence.

Overall, all variables in the study were effectively supported. The relationships between dependent and independent variables were confirmed through hypothesis testing. Strong correlations and discriminant validity (greater than 0.50) indicated the reliability of the measurement items. Internal consistency was high, with alpha values close to 0.90. Factors such as work self-efficacy, work tenacity, and organizational belongingness, along with the moderating role of workload intensity, were all supported. Motivation development was found to enhance educators' well-being, consistent with prior studies [20]. Understanding one's full potential and managing workloads effectively were also critical factors [22].

Qualitative findings reinforced the importance of wellness arrangements, professional development, and supportive institutional culture in improving both emotional and professional development. The three identified themes, resources, leadership, and belongingness, served as interconnected pillars supporting educators' well-being and professional success. Empathetic leadership promoted open communication, trust, and participation, while institutional resources such as counseling, wellness programs, professional development, and mentorship strengthened mental health, job satisfaction, and reduced stress. Cultivating a sense of

community through recognition, inclusion, and collaboration fostered belonging and psychological safety. Together, these factors created a supportive ecosystem that enhanced educators' emotional balance, professional goals, and overall morale, contributing to sustainable productivity in higher education institutions.

5. Conclusion

The results of this investigation indicated that the emotional well-being of educators resulted from the interplay of affective, emotional, psychological, and organizational attributes. Self-efficacy and persistence enabled educators to cope with challenges effectively. An atmosphere of support and a sense of belonging was necessary to promote positive emotions, reduce stress, and strengthen commitment. The findings highlighted that managing workloads within a supportive environment was essential to enhance teacher well-being. Educators' emotional well-being could be promoted at the organizational level when universities implemented mentorship programs, peer support initiatives, and inclusive leadership. Educators' confidence should be emphasized in workshops and reflection practice sessions. Long service commitment should be recognized and rewarded. Attributes such as belonging, self-efficacy, and persistence should be integrated into recruitment, onboarding, and performance evaluation processes to support comprehensive faculty development. The adoption of reflective practices through coaching, dialogue, and journaling also required facilitation. Some limitations of the study included the sample size, the demographic composition, and the lack of long-term studies to establish causal relationships. Future research should examine changes in well-being over time and explore differences between Western and non-Western contexts to investigate the role of culture. Additionally, the potential effects of virtual belongingness and digital self-efficacy on educators' affective well-being are topics worth exploring in future studies.

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Author Contribution

Authors should clearly specify the roles and contributions of each individual involved in the research to ensure proper attribution of credit and transparency regarding responsibilities. The specific roles of the authors in this study were as follows: Conceptualization was carried out by Zhao XuKun and Gary Peng-Liang Tan. Methodology and data collection were conducted by Zhao XuKun. Data analysis and writing were undertaken by both Zhao XuKun and Gary Peng-Liang Tan. Supervision was provided by Gary Peng-Liang Tan.

Competing Interest

The author declares that there are no financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the conduct, interpretation, or presentation of this research. All aspects of the study were carried out independently and objectively.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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